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RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM





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# RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

*By*

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1922

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“If you glance at history’s pages,  
In all lands and eras known  
You will find the vanished ages  
Far more wicked than our own.

As you scan each word and letter,  
You will realize it more,  
That the world today is better  
Than it ever was before.”

— *Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*



*To*

MY TWO BROTHERS IN THE MINISTRY :  
THE REVEREND EDWARD SMITH, AND  
THE REVEREND ATTREE SMITH.



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## PREFACE

ON different occasions during the past decade, before Ministerial Associations and elsewhere, the writer of this volume has been called upon to defend the optimistic view in regard to church attendance and the progress of the Christian religion. The following chapters furnish an opportunity to state his position more fully and definitely. No effort has been made to be exhaustive. The aim has been simply to give a general outline of an argument that could, he thinks, be made much more complete and convincing.

No one just now would care to speak a word which might have the effect of putting the church to sleep in an easy-going complacency. We must not present nor cherish a type of optimism that cuts the nerve of endeavor. This is the time for the church to become alert, and to put forth renewed energy to the achievement of greater tasks. But when facts warrant it, one is justified in speaking a word designed to give the hope and inspiration that come, if not from assured victory, at least from the feeling that we are making substantial progress.

The author is quite conscious of the short comings of the modern church — her lack of spiritual power, her divided councils, her over-lapping in denominational effort, her present day reactionary tendencies, her over emphasis of institutionalism, her need of

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more intensive work — a hundred complaints can be brought against the modern church. Neither is he unconscious of the magnitude of the task that still lies before the church. This task when seen in all its proportions and complexities is little less than staggering. That some two-thirds of the human race are illiterate and crying for light, and nearly the same number are unchristianized and in dire need of the Christ, and literally millions are suffering for the bare necessities of physical existence forbid that one should approach his work in over confidence.

Neither is he unmindful of the blemishes of modern Christian civilization — of the prevalence of crime, of juvenile delinquency, of the disregard of the sanctity of the marriage vow, of the deep set greed and common practice of profiteering, of the “Hell’s Half Acres” in the large cities of America and Europe, of the murderous class hatred that makes possible the unspeakable horrors of the Herrin massacre. He is more or less familiar with the verdict of modern biology and the intelligence tests of modern psychology as presented in such works as Mr. Stoddard’s *The Revolt Against Civilization*. But dip almost anywhere into the past and conditions can be found so dark that one hesitates to paint them and hence charitably refrains from making comparison with past history involving the darker aspects of human nature. There is, undeniably, enough bad in the world today. But the world is not going to the bad. It moves, and it is moving toward the Christian goal.

Midst the troubled conditions of society in our

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age, midst all the greed, wickedness, and ugly passions of men, "*Is the church retrograding or improving, is the Christian religion advancing, standing still, or waning?*" This is primarily the theme of this volume. The larger question "Is the world growing better?" is touched upon but this is not the main thesis. Freely admitting that the church is not what it can be and ought to be, it will be maintained here that this, up to date, is Christianity's best day and tomorrow promises to be far better.

R. P. Smith.



## COMMON FALLACIES

"There is majestic harmony and a sublime rhythm in the song of the centuries. Now, the "Miserere" wails through the vaulted chambers, and harsh discord rudely breaks the harmony, but only to brighten its charm, as heard through the distance of centuries. Again the "Hallelujah Chorus" is heard from pole to pole, and the paeon of victory portends the final triumphant issue in the sweet harmony of peace."

*Julian Henry Myers.*

"The imperfections of the present must suggest and inspire the betterment of the future. To publish evils is not always to promise reform. Discontent becomes constructive only when it is joined by hopefulness. — Restlessness under inequitable conditions has always been a factor in Americanism. But it has been creative rather than pessimistic. When Americans lose this resilient confidence in the future, America will have grown senile."

*Shailer Mathew —  
The Validity of American Ideals.*

## CHAPTER I

### COMMON FALLACIES

IT IS not intended in this volume to minimize the evils of this age, the imperfections of the modern church, nor the magnitude of the tasks that lie before the church. Conditions are bad enough and religious progress slow enough. It will, however, be argued that there are more solid reasons for hope, for intelligent optimism than in any other period in the history of the Christian religion.

Few of us are historians. We lack the historic perspective, — that peculiar gift of the imagination that can make a vivid picture of the past. We are given to minify the faults of the past; indeed, this in itself is a ground for optimism; that, as a race, we are not only willing to have the faults of the past fade away, but we actually strive to bury them. On the other hand, we magnify the virtues of the past. This too is reason for hope, — showing that the race intuitively garners the good. One strong evidence indicating there is purpose in history is that evil is destroyed and the good preserved. History contains a principle, a force, a spirit “that makes for righteousness” and this spirit is never entirely inactive. It was never so apparent as today.

But, turning to the present, our psychology is reversed. As we struggle with life’s tasks, we mag-

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nify life's problems, hindrances, and evils with which we contend, and minify the good we enjoy. This common fallacy should be carefully kept in mind in comparing the past with the present. The present with all its evil is vividly before us, — open to our gaze. The past with chiefly the good is before us. Most of the bad has faded out of memory.

There never was a time when people tumbled over each other to get to church, or jammed the door trying to get in, or, having gotten in, were embarrassed for standing room. This may have been true in individual cases and for brief periods of time, but not generally and not for any considerable length of time. But this is true now spasmodically. Witness the Billy Sunday and Gypsy Smith meetings; also the present movement in Scotland, and the mass movements toward Christianity in the Orient.

True, some folks remember crowded churches in their childhood, and when it seemed the custom in their neighborhood for everybody to go to church. But, were you to ask these people what per cent of the population of the country in general were church members and regularly attended church; or what was the seating capacity of churches at that time compared with the seating capacity of churches today; or should you ask them to compare the seatings of the churches with the population of that age, and the seatings of the churches with the population of this age, they would be at a loss to give any intelligent answers. The seating capacity of churches today,



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compared with the population, is by far the highest, in the history of the country. This fact also must be taken into careful consideration in comparing the present with the past, particularly by those who are given to magnifying the empty benches in modern churches.

Statements in regard to people flocking to churches in an early day are just about as trustworthy as the ordinary man's observation about the weather, or one's impressions of the old home after one has been away for forty years. I was reared on an eighty-acre farm. It was divided into ten-acre fields. As a lad, those fields seemed very large to me, — particularly when I was compelled to hoe a row of corn from one end to the other. My boyhood vision of those fields still remains. At a distance they still seem large, but when I return now to the old home and see those fields as they really are, they seem the merest garden patches as compared with the concept that lies in the back part of my brain about them, — a conception that I find impossible to correct except by returning to the scenes of my boyhood. It is this bit of intellectual readjustment we need in comparing churches and church attendance of the past with that of the present.

People who once attended church and have dropped out of the habit, seem to think that others also have dropped out of the habit, or they unconsciously try to justify their own course by persuading themselves that people do not go to church now as they did in an earlier day. Such observations find

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their way into our newspapers and magazines until a large part of our population have come to think that churches are comparatively poorly attended, have lost their influence, and that Christianity is waning.

Not only must these common fallacies be guarded against, there is also the fallacy of the impatience of the reformer who thinks in terms of months and years. He is anxious to see the immediate results from his labors. His statements are often the mere expression of this anxiety. Great causes move in centuries and cycles. In their earlier periods especially they seem to advance slowly or even to lose ground. They go forward by alternate periods of gain and loss. During the periods of loss it is quite easy to become discouraged or even to despair over their final outcome.

So careful a writer as Charles A. Ellwood, whom we shall have occasion frequently to quote approvingly, says "We have come to the parting of the ways. Unless the world becomes speedily Christian, it is bound to become speedily pagan. We can not tolerate pagan standards in business, in politics, in education, in art, literature and science without coming to repudiate the Christian ideal of life altogether." The church is not tolerating these pagan tendencies. She is preserving her own soul by protesting against them. Whether such predictions are true or false may not be known for fifty or a hundred years, and by that time they will be forgotten. The probability is that this statement will prove false, for we do know that religious literature is dotted all over with

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prophecies of this nature. Among so many, a limited number are sure to be correct, as was Abraham Lincoln's declaration that this nation can not long endure half free and half slave. As a matter of fact, in a progressive civilization, every day is a parting of the way. It is also true that causes after a period of gradual development often do culminate in unexpected victory. The temperance reform suddenly resulting in national prohibition is an example. There is some wisdom in the words of Horace Mann, however, who after witnessing a measure to the support of which he had given years of toil, defeated in the Massachusetts legislature, said: "The truth is I was in a hurry and God is not."

In our moments of pessimism it is at times helpful to remind ourselves how brief after all is the time the Christian religion has been at work in the world — how short a time, comparatively, it has had for the stupendous task of transforming the character of men and establishing the kingdom of God on earth. Man has been on the earth 250,000 or even 1,000,000 or more years. Compared with this duration Christianity has been at work but a few hours. There are those who estimate the time man has lived on the earth as a period so vast, that comparatively, the historic period of man is but seven minutes.<sup>1</sup>

Allowance should furthermore be made for the

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<sup>1</sup> C. E. W. Dodwell in *Righteousness versus Religion* says: "The sciences of Geology, Anthropology, Astro-Physics and others prove conclusively that the earth has been habitable, and the abode of man, for an incalculable period of time; certainly several millions of years." Many conservative writers place the time at least a million years. For a brief discussion of the time man has lived on the earth see Conklin, "The Direction of Human Evolution," Chapter II.

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pessimistic utterances during and immediately after the war. Edward Carpenter is typical of a class in accusing "Christian priests in the forms of its various sects, Greek or Catholic, Lutheran or Protestant, of having in these last days rushed forth to urge nations to slaughter each other with every diabolical device of science, and to glorify the war-cry of patriotism in defiance of the principle of universal brotherhood."<sup>1</sup> There is a real inconsistency, of course, in Christian people warring against each other at all, but against such an outburst of paganism as occurred in the central powers in 1914, we should not have been worthy the name of Christian nations had we made no resistance. Future history will, no doubt, record with approval the fact that the major part of Christianity resisted and checked, even by war, such pagan tendencies.

But it is the after-war symptoms, they tell us, that are most discouraging. History shows such tendencies after all great wars. These after-war pagan tendencies are not to be denied either in America or in Europe. Much of our during-war idealism has faded, but at the same time after-war utterances are likely to be unduly pessimistic. The world mind is weary. We are in a world psychology not unlike that of a minister on "Blue Monday." This is especially true of English and European writers — those who were under the greatest strain and who now stand nearest the hardest problems of reconstruction.

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<sup>1</sup> Pagan and Christian Creeds, p. 258.

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Their utterances can hardly be regarded as normal, for they see through a glass darkly.

Much criticism about the church springs from surface impressions. It is not based on fact, or on careful scientific investigation. These careless impressions should be removed from the popular mind and a more accurate picture of the progress and achievements and the ever widening and deepening influence of the Christian religion should be brought to public attention. Also the after-war criticism by able writers should be held in suspense at least until we are farther from the scenes of that awful tragedy. We predict that criticism of the church and our modern social conditions in general will be far more hopeful in ten or twenty years, after our feeling and thinking has had time to become normal.



CARELESS CRITICISMS

In 1711 Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, in London, began the publication of the *Spectator*, in every number presenting an editorial-like essay that laughed kindly at the follies and weaknesses of 1711. Curiously enough the follies and weaknesses are those of today. — Are those critics right who call the present times degenerate? Only the future can tell, but the lesson of the *Spectator* is that every period has its virtues and its follies, and that human nature in one time is the same that it was in another. A stronger and better civilization succeeded that one which Addison and Steele ridiculed. Social degeneration today may be only apparent. It may be that we see our faults so clearly that we are leading the way to an age that will be as superior to 1922 as 1922 is superior to 1711.

*The Independent and the Weekly Review*  
April 1, 1922.

"It is foolish to expect that religion and morality can escape the criticism which is being applied to all other institutions. Their friends can best serve their interests not by seeking to shield them from criticism but by seeking to guide criticism into rational channels."

*Charles A. Ellwood.*



## CHAPTER II

### CARELESS CRITICISMS

THESE careless criticisms of the church today are usually to the effect that it is losing members, that people no longer go to church as they used to, and that men, especially young men, have tabooed the church. It is pointed out that we have Christian activities but have lost Christian faith and experience; that the sanctions of religion have been greatly weakened; and that indifference, infidelity, or out-broken crime are rampant in the land. Organized Christianity particularly is held to be a failure, a back number, or a spent force. Cynics are speaking not of the church militant; but of the "church impotent here on earth." Much of this criticism goes unchallenged. A very little investigation, however, would indicate that it has little or no basis in fact.

Such criticism is not confined to this age, it can be traced back in church papers and general literature for three or four thousand years. It is usually couched in practically the same terms and is about equally common to every generation. Yet Jewish religion blossomed out into Christianity, and Christianity into our modern civilization, and progress, with a few exceptions here and there, has been, we believe, the law of human history.

It is reported that there is in one of the European

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Museums the oldest known manuscript in Syllabic writing on papyrus written in Egypt. This manuscript reaches back at least to 1500 B. C. The writer devotes his essay to deploring moral conditions, the trifling character of the young people of his time, and imploring them to return to the higher faith and better standards of their fathers.<sup>1</sup> Dip anywhere into the literature of the past, and you can find criticism against religion and the waywardness of young people doleful enough to make the heart sick. But the Church of God, the moral welfare of the race, has gone on to new and larger achievements, and today is enjoying a measure of prosperity, and exercising an influence never before known.

All are familiar with that classic of pessimistic expression found in Jewish literature about 1000 B. C. "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts: The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left: and they seek my life to take it away." But the Lord replied to Elijah, "I have left me 7,000 in Israel, who have not bowed unto Baal and who have not kissed him."

History at times seems literally to mock at such criticisms. In the third century Diocletian believed he had utterly destroyed Christianity. A medal was struck in his honor bearing the words, "The name of Christ being extinguished," and a monument was

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<sup>1</sup> "Civilization Still Survives," an article in a recent issue of the Outlook.

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erected to him for "having everywhere abolished the superstition of Christ."

Voltaire said, "In less than a hundred years Christianity will have been swept from existence, and will have passed into history." But the house where Voltaire lived became a depot for a Bible society and has been packed with Bibles, while his old printing press has been used to print the Word of God! It was said during the French Revolution, referring to the Christian religion, that the superstitions of eighteen centuries had been overthrown, but it was only a short time till Christ's kingdom was prospering among the children of the Revolution.

Tom Paine, returning from France, knowing that his "Age of Reason" was sold on the streets of London and Paris at a penny apiece and sent by the shipload to America, said, with an air of satisfaction and confidence, "In five years from now there will be not a Bible in America. I have gone through it with an ax and cut down all trees. They are no longer timber, but lumber, to be put with all other lumber on the shelf. The Bible is a tissue of absurdities and falsehoods, which I will expose to the ridicule of the world."

In 1798 the Presbyterian General Assembly sounded the tocsin,—"We desire to direct your attention toward that bursting storm which threatens to sweep before it the religious principles, institutions and morals of our people. We perceive with pain and fearful apprehension the destruction of religious

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principles and practice among our fellow citizens, and an abounding infidelity.”

Chancellor Kent, born 1763, says: “In my younger days, there were few professional men who were not infidels.” And Timothy Dwight declared: “Stripplings scarcely fledged thought the light of wisdom had just began to dawn upon the human race. Religion they discovered to be a vision of dotards and nurses, a system of fraud and trickery imposed by priestcraft. Revelation was found to be without authority or evidence, and moral obligation a cobweb which might indeed entangle flies, but with which creatures of stronger will nobly disclaim to be confined.”

Despite all such predictions and criticisms, Christianity continues to make progress, to engraft itself more deeply into all our institutions, and to gain adherents in ever increasing numbers. The principles of this religion were never before so firmly established in the affections and reverence of mankind. There is also much modern criticism against both the church and Christianity, but in all probability in a hundred years most of it will sound about as foolish as that we have just quoted. Some of this is sober and scholarly. Some is intended to be destructive. There is much also that is simply the outgrowth of pessimism.

In 1921 a manifesto was issued in England by such leaders of religious thought as W. B. Selbie, John Clifford, L. P. Jacks and A. E. Garvie, containing the following: “No lover of mankind or of progress, no student of religion, of morals, or of economics, can

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regard the present trend of affairs without feelings of great anxiety. Civilization itself seems to be on the wane. It is becoming increasingly evident that the world has taken a wrong turn." This is pessimism arising, no doubt, in part at least from standing so close to the great problems of reconstruction in Europe. Edward Carpenter, in *Pagan and Christian Creeds* has a chapter on "The Exodus of Christianity" in which he says "That Christianity can continue to hold the field of religion in the Western World is neither probable nor desirable." This is simply destructive criticism. In somewhat the same vein in an investigation based upon a study of the opinions of nearly a thousand students in our American colleges, J. H. Leuba writes: "Christianity as a system of belief, has utterly broken down and nothing definite and convincing has taken its place." A study of the views of the same number of students in our colleges fifty or a hundred years ago might have given even a darker picture; or the selection of a different class of students might have given opinions justifying an opposite conclusion. H. G. Wells, in the *Outlines of History* thinks the religion of the future "will not be Christianity, nor Islam nor Buddhism, nor any such specialized form of religion, but religion itself pure and undefiled." That Christianity may in the future be stripped of some of its institutionalism and approach nearer the very heart and teaching and simple spirit of Jesus we agree, but the religion of Jesus will remain the religion of the future. Prof. Santayana in *Character and Opinion in the United*

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*States* says: "Civilization is perhaps approaching one of those long winters that overtake it from time to time. A flood of barbarism from below may soon level all the fair works of our Christian ancestors, as another flood two thousand years ago levelled those of the ancients. Such a catastrophe would be no reason for despair. Under the deluge, and watered by it, seeds of all sorts would survive against the time to come." It is perhaps true that should our present civilization fall, there is enough good seed in it to bear fruit in some new form. All dead civilizations have contributed much to modern civilization. But he who invites or encourages disaster in the hope that some better civilization may spring up is following the course of the Russian Bolshevik who purposely resorts to wholesale destruction, hoping that out of the resulting chaos a new and better civilization may come.

Bury in the *History of Freedom of Thought* declares "Religion is gradually becoming less indispensable; the further we go back in the past, the more valuable is religion as an element of civilization; as we advance, it retreats more and more into the background to be replaced by science." There is little doubt but that science is destined to become a larger factor in religion, but that religion recedes into the background in the measure that science advances is simply not true historically. Lothrop Stoddard in his book *The Revolt against Civilization*, much of which is written in the spirit of the alarmist, fears the possible collapse of civilization through the

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rapid increase of inferior elements and the decline of the superior element, and sees the chief remedy in the science of eugenics and regulation of marriage. He maintains "that civilization depends upon superior racial stocks. At one end of the human scale are a number of superior individuals; at the other a number of inferior individuals — progress is primarily due to the superiors. But what about inferiors? We have seen that they are incapable of either creating or furthering civilization, and are thus a negative hindrance to progress. But the inferiors are not mere negative factors in civilized life; they are also positive in an inverse, destructive sense. The inferiors are instinctively or consciously enemies of civilization and they are its enemies not by chance, but because they are more or less uncivilizable." He thinks under present conditions, the small families of the superior stock indicate that this element will decrease and run out, and that through the preservation of the unfit by modern philanthropy, and the large families of the inferiors, this element is rapidly increasing; hence at present civilization is headed toward ruin. Modern biology and psychology *have* compelled us to place greater emphasis upon the influence of heredity as a determining factor in the progress of the race.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand and contrary to Mr. Stoddard's theory both history and social science point out "That human communities progress very largely in proportion as they raise the general level or

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<sup>1</sup> See "The New Heredity," by Vernon Kellogg, the *Atlantic Monthly* for November, 1922. This article makes a careful comparison of the influence of heredity and environment.

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average of their total life; and this level is raised not by producing a few superior individuals, but by raising the weak, developing the undeveloped and fitting as many as possible for the best possible life.”<sup>1</sup>

This is the theory on which Christian reformers and leaders have worked and are working. It accounts for Christianity’s uplifting influence in the past. It is this theory that makes us optimists as we work among backward races, and inferior<sup>2</sup> groups. It will be remembered that Celsus about 200 A. D. jeered at the early Christians in the following terms: “It is only the simpletons, the ignoble, the senseless — slaves and womenfolk and children — whom they wish to persuade or can persuade — wool-dressers and cobblers, the most uneducated and vulgar persons, and whosoever is a sinner, or unintelligent or a fool, in a word whoever is god-forsaken, him the kingdom of God will receive.”<sup>3</sup>

William James’ *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and Harold Begbie’s *Twice Born Men*,<sup>4</sup> both written from the standpoint of psychology, give ample evidence of the converting and transforming power of religion. In his introduction Mr. Begbie writes: “Whatever it may be, conversion is the only means by which a radically bad person may be changed into a radically good person. Whatever we may think of the phenomenon itself, the fact stands clear and unassailable that, by this thing called conver-

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<sup>1</sup> Ellwood, *The Reconstruction of Christianity*, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> There may be backward and undeveloped races, but there are perhaps no inferior races.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Carpenter. *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, p. 220.

<sup>4</sup> Both these works appeared before the war.



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sion, men consciously wrong, inferior, and unhappy, become consciously right, superior and happy. It produces not a change but a revolution in character, It does not alter; it creates a new personality.

“There is nothing else; there can be nothing else. Science despairs of these people and pronounces them hopeless and incurable. Politicians find themselves at the end of their resources. Philanthropy begins to wonder whether its charity could not be turned into a more fertile channel. The law speaks of ‘criminal classes.’ It is only religion that is not in despair about this mass of profitless evil dragging at the heels of progress — the religion which still believes in miracles.”

*The Chicago Interior* at the time of the appearance of this work made the following significant observation:

“What is the reason why there is a slack emphasis and an uncertain opinion among pastors and lay members in the churches in respect to conversion? Why is the voice of a psychologist clearer here today than the voice of the typical Christian pastor?

“Doubtless the reason is in part the new value put on religious education. The thought of taking the child and training it up so straight morally and religiously that there will never need to be a radical overturn in life — so that Christ may finally be accepted by mere ‘decision’ — has grown up to be the master-thought of many Christian workers.

“And that’s a good thought. Don’t let anybody disparage it.

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"But the pity is the pity that goes with nearly every step forward in the Church's learning of new truth — the popular Christian mind doesn't prove big enough to grasp a new truth without losing hold, for the time at least, on the old truth it had before.

"Somehow it is terribly hard work for Christian thinking to occupy both halves of truth's big circumference at once; it gets congested on one or the other semicircle. So, in this case:

"Learning to appreciate religious education, the Church has drifted away from its appreciation of conversion. . . . ."

Prof. Ellwood makes the same point. "The 'religious psychosis', as we might call it, has produced more miracles in human behavior than even the most enthusiastic advocate of religion has ever given it credit for. Not only have, by means of it, drunkards and criminals been reformed, prostitutes been led to a pure life, sinners in general made to repent, but the character of whole communities has been radically altered, even transformed, in the course of a few years. Such facts as these are not open even to scientific doubt, because they are checked up by overwhelming evidence on the one hand, and by the general principles of normal and abnormal psychology on the other hand."<sup>1</sup>

That class of writers who think we can only be saved by the "thorough-breds" need to be reminded that not infrequently in history the stones which the builders reject become the head of the corner.

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<sup>1</sup> The Reconstruction of Religion, pp. 33-34.

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Prof. Fitch does well to remind us that the Pharisees and scribes, Herods and Pilates, prime ministers and politicians have seldom known how to read the signs of the times. "It were better, though men still call it disloyal and indecent, to turn aside from them and listen to the publican and sinners . . . . to gaunt prophets crying in the wilderness, for it is there, the maimed, the spoiled, the reckless and storm-driven and passionate people, the God's fools and absurd idealists, who have seen first the coming of most kingdoms."<sup>1</sup>

Modern biology<sup>2</sup> has demonstrated the very great importance of heredity, and the science of eugenics, no doubt, has a real contribution to make to the welfare of the human family; but the greatest hope for the children of men is the simple, well-trying Gospel of Jesus.

It is neither expected nor desired, however, that the Church should escape criticism. Criticism today is mercilessly directed against all institutions. A real service is rendered the Church by a sober, accurate, sympathetic study of its condition, and by well directed criticism or even censure. It is the thoughtless, faultfinding, reactionary attitude that proves harm-

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Parker Fitch—Can the Church Survive in the Changing Order.

<sup>2</sup> However, it might be well for those who are inclined to put great stress on the verdict of modern biology to remember that biology is comparatively a new science. It is not yet quite sure of its own verdict. Prof. Conklin, himself a noted biologist, "The Direction of Human Evolution" points out "That biological sanction has been claimed for wholly antagonistic opinions, for and against war, communism, woman suffrage, polygamy, etc. Those who are searching for biological analogies to support almost any preconceived theory in philosophy, sociology, education or government can usually find it." p. 110.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

ful. "Destructive criticism must be clearly distinguished from constructive criticism. Between the two there is all the difference between a toxin and a tonic. Constructive criticism aims at remedying defects and perfecting the existing order by evolutionary methods. Destructive criticism, on the contrary, inveighs against current defects in a bitter, carping, pessimistic spirit." Constructive criticism is optimistic and wholesome. Destructive criticism is morbid, given to complaining. It quickly becomes a disease and rapidly spreads and affects larger groups who seem to assume that their ability to see faults is a mark of superior insight and intelligence, failing to realize that mere faultfinding is the easiest thing in the world, and that it blights like an early frost. Careless criticism quickly becomes confirmed pessimism, and the fruits of pessimism are stagnation, retrogression, or revolution.

While religious conditions are not all that could be desired, the modern tendency toward pessimism in regard to religion is very unwholesome, and if not checked, will, in the end, prove extremely damaging.

## THE GOOD OLD TIME RELIGION

"Our faith is not in dead saints' bones  
In altars of vain sacrifice;  
Nor is it in the stately stones  
That rise in beauty toward the skies.

Our faith is in the Christ who walks  
With men today, in streets and mart;  
The constant Friend who thinks and talks  
With those who seek him with the heart.

We would not spurn the ancient lore,  
The prophet's word or psalmist's prayer;  
But lo! our Leader goes before,  
To-morrow's battles to prepare.

We serve no God whose work is done,  
Who rests within his firmament;  
Our God, His labors but begun,  
Toils evermore, with power unspent.

God was and is and e'er shall be;  
Christ lived and loved — and loves us still;  
And man goes forward, proud and free,  
God's present purpose to fulfill."

— *Thomas Curtis Clark* — *Quoted from the*  
*Northwestern Christian Advocate,*  
*April 12, 1922.*

## CHAPTER III

### THE GOOD OLD TIME RELIGION

A WRITER in the *Congregationalist and Advance* not long since reviewed the findings of a comparatively recent meeting of the Church Historical Society at which some of the records of the religious leaders of one hundred years ago were being read. If these records be true, it would seem that only a very small portion of the population were then in any wise interested in the church. The immorality of the country communities was of such a sordidness that it would not be tolerated in New York or Chicago for one week. The slight opposition to the liquor traffic was being voiced by the "cranks" and "lopsided brethren." The most bitter sectarianism was rife and communities were split almost past belief by the dissensions between churches. Religion consisted mostly in emotionalism. It then appeared that the power of the church was rapidly waning, and that it had lost all influence over young people. It does not take much insight into the conditions of the past to convince one that the "fine present days are superior to the good old days."

From 1817 to 1830, — a period of about a dozen years, — 5,788,900 volumes of the works of Voltaire and Rousseau and similar writers were circulated

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

in this country.<sup>1</sup> Outside of Washington there were but few statesmen who were pronounced in their religious views. Morality was extremely low. Profanity and impurity were will-nigh universal. There was sabbath desecration everywhere, and among all classes. The use of intoxicating liquors was appallingly prevalent. Ministerial associations imbibed freely and ministers of the gospel often bore the mark of the "staggering step" and the "maudlin speech." Slavery was everywhere. Church life was narrow and bigoted and denominations were not only wasting their energies in mutual hatred, contention and strife, but their activities were extremely limited. There were virtually no Sunday schools, except a few started experimentally, and usually against pronounced opposition of official boards. There were no young people's societies and few young people in the churches. There were no religious organizations of men of any kind; no mid-week prayer meetings, except in the larger churches;<sup>2</sup> virtually no missionary movements or benevolent organizations; no Young Men's Christian Associations or Young Women's Christian Associations, or Red Cross work; practically no protestant hospitals or temperance organizations; no instrumental music and but little real Bible study, except of the most literal and mechanical character.

This is not an overdrawn indictment of "the good old time religion" of a few generations ago of which

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<sup>1</sup> Edwin N. Hardy—The Christian Churches and Educated Men, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Edwin N. Hardy—The Churches and Educated Men, p. 115.



## THE GOOD OLD TIME RELIGION

we hear so much. One could keep in bounds of facts and still paint a darker picture of this not distant past. Instead of drawing inspiration from this dry fountain, would it not be better to rejoice over our modern religion and warm our faith in the hopeful prospects of the future, rather than in reminiscences of the past?

Check these careless critics and doleful saints in one direction, and they will wail forth in another. "Yes," they will say, "there may be church members, but they are worldly, they do not attend the churches as they used to in the 'good old days.' Today people are flocking to the lodges instead of to the churches."

Perhaps an investigation here again might prove inspiring in its results. A recent number of the *Christian Century* tells how one man went out to investigate lodges and found one lodge with seven hundred members had thirty-five present for a weekly business meeting. Another with five hundred members had an average of thirty. The American Legion of his town has eleven hundred members and an average attendance of sixty men for business meetings, while his church of twelve hundred members had four hundred forty-five in the morning service and two hundred six in the evening service, while the much lamented prayer meeting averaged higher than any of the three lodges investigated. These figures are a fairly good index to conditions in every normal city. Indeed there are no organizations to which men belong which they

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

attend with greater faithfulness than they attend the numerous services connected with a modern church.

The writer is not what is known as a popular pulpiteer, but he has delivered some twenty-five hundred addresses bearing upon some phase of the religious life in the city in which he now resides, and still the same people in audiences of about the same number wait upon his ministry. It is to be doubted if any teacher, lawyer, musician or lecturer, however brilliant, on any other topic, could under similar conditions interest as large numbers for the same length of time. It is not the speaker, it is the never-dying interest in the church and subject matter that guarantees attendance and attention. The marvel, the miracle, is that people attend church so well.

No apology is here made for lack of interest in either the church or the lodge. The attendance at each could be greatly improved. But interest in and attendance upon church services without doubt surpass that of any other organization to which men pledge their adherence and loyalty. This fact should be more largely recognized and more cheerfully acknowledged.

One does not care to picture with any degree of vividness, the faults of the church of the more distant past. It becomes too dark. It is sufficient merely to allude to the theological rancor which led to the assassination of bishops and ecclesiastics, to papal indulgences, to the extreme folly of encourag-

## THE GOOD OLD TIME RELIGION

ing Children's Crusades, to the shameful murders of the Albigenses<sup>1</sup> and the Huguenots<sup>2</sup> to the defence of the institution of human slavery, to the inquisition and the cruel practice of burning heretics, and to the execution of thousands of witches. This superstition spread to America appearing in the Salem Witchcraft incident. We are shocked over the sectarian hate and strife in Ireland today, but this is but a continuation of a condition that was quite common all over Europe in an earlier age. It is difficult indeed for one who is at all acquainted with history to grow enthusiastic over 'the good old time religion.'

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<sup>1</sup> For a brief account, see the New International Encyclopaedia.

<sup>2</sup> For a brief account, see the New International Encyclopaedia.



## PROGRESS IN GENERAL

"As we survey the spectacle of the past, we are impressed that the study of history is the strongest evidence of God. We hear no argument from design, but we feel the breath of the designer. We see the Universal life molding the individual lives, the one will dominating the many wills, the infinite wisdom utilizing the finite folly, the changeless truth permeating the restless error, the boundless beneficence bringing blessing out of all."

*Rev. George Matheson, D. D.*

"The Christian church undertakes no impossible task. It summons men to devotion to no impracticable ideal. A Christian world is not only practicable, — in the long run it will be found that no other sort is practicable."

*Charles A. Ellwood,  
The Reconstruction of Religion.*

"The twentieth century has dawned with much to encourage us. The deadening pall of materialism . . . is being lifted, while on every side is seen an eager craving for a religion which will both satisfy the mind and strengthen the soul of man."

*Micou, — Basic Ideas in Religion, p. 3.*

## CHAPTER IV

### PROGRESS IN GENERAL

**N**OTE first the encouraging side of the numerical growth of our Master's Kingdom. Take a general view of this growth. The impression will be sufficiently accurate for our purpose if we give the figures in round numbers. At the end of the first century of the Christian era there were 500,000 followers of Christ. At the end of the second century there were 2,000,000. At the end of the third 5,000,000. At the end of the fourth, 10,000,000. At the end of the tenth, 50,000,000. At the end of the fifteenth, 100,000,000. At the end of the eighteenth, 200,000,000. At the end of the nineteenth, 500,000,000. In 1920 about 600,000,000.

It is estimated that the number of conversions to Christianity during the fifty years ending in 1850 was greater than during the first sixteen centuries; that the number during the twenty years ending in 1870 was greater than during the fifty years before; and that the conversions during the single year 1890 were fifty per cent greater than the number of nominal Christians during the first century of the Christian era. During the five year period from 1880 to 1886 there was a gain of 40,000,000, that is, a larger gain than was made during the first nine centuries of the Christian history. But the chief gain of Christianity

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

has been since 1890. Indeed the first twenty years of this century marks as great a gain as the first seventeen hundred years of the Christian era. The gain in church membership last year, 1921, in the United States alone, was over 1,000,000. In other words, the last twelve months witnessed in a single country as great a gain in the Christian ranks as the first one hundred and fifty years of the Christian era. A single denomination, the Baptist, including Canada and the United States, report a gain of a million members from 1918 to 1921. This denomination now numbers over 8,000,000. It took 220 years for them to gain their first million, 20 years to gain their second, 10 years to gain their third, 8 years to gain their fourth, 9 years to gain their fifth, 7 years to gain their sixth, 5 years to gain their seventh, and 3 years to gain their eighth.

But this in no measure represents the entire growth of Christianity. During the rapid, extensive movement it has been working itself — its spirit and truth — into music, painting, poetry, — all forms of art and literature and calling to its support, as will appear further on in this discussion, scores of additional agencies and institutions that will very materially help in future conquests.

Furthermore, we should hold in mind that “Where-soever Christianity has breathed, it has accelerated the movement of humanity, it has quickened the pulse of life, it has stimulated the incentive to thought, it has turned the passions into peace, it has warmed the heart into brotherhood, it has fanned the imagination



## PROGRESS IN GENERAL

into genius, it has freshened the soul into purity. The progress of Christian Europe has been the progress of intellect over force, of political right over arbitrary power, of human liberty over the chains of slavery, of moral law over social corruption, of order over anarchy, of enlightenment over ignorance, of life over death," and of right over might and love over hate.

Roughly speaking the Christian Constituency of the world today is . . . . . 875,000,000  
 Protestants . . . . . 460,000,000  
 Roman Catholics . . . . . 290,000,000  
 Eastern Catholics . . . . . 125,000,000

The leading Protestant denominations number:  
 Lutherans . . . . . 190,000,000  
 Methodists . . . . . 40,000,000  
 Baptists . . . . . 37,000,000  
 Presbyterians . . . . . 30,000,000  
 Church of England . . . . . 20,000,000  
 Congregationalists . . . . . 7,000,000  
 Disciples of Christ . . . . . 3,500,000

In the above we have multiplied the protestant membership by 2.8 to secure the church constituency. This was not done with either the Roman or Eastern Catholic statistics.

The definition of the term 'Constituency' is varied. Defining it as "all those who by birthright, or sympathetic interest, as well as by actual enrolled membership, hold some form of denominational religious faith, careful study of the population of the United States has brought some good statisticians to the con-

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

clusion that the figures of the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Latter Day Saints and Salvation army presented in the Year Book represent constituency . . . . . Dr. Walter Laidlaw of New York, who has had large experience as a statistician of the New York Federation of Churches and in the Census Bureau of the United States, has demonstrated through varied tests that a multiple of 2.8 upon protestant membership figures is approximately correct.”<sup>1</sup> We have simply used this multiple upon the protestant religious statistics of the world. It is admitted that the multiple used in the United States may not hold good in other countries. While not accurate, it may serve for this general view of the numerical strength of the Christian religion in the world today.

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<sup>1</sup> The Year Book of the Churches. 1921-22, p. 262.

PROGRESS IN THE UNITED STATES

## PROGRESS IN THE UNITED STATES

“Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles.”

*Washington, in his “Farewell Address.”*

“The future of the United States during the next half-century sometimes presents itself to the mind as a struggle between two forces, the one beneficial, the other malign, the one striving to speed the Nation on to a port of safety before this time of trial arrives, the other to retard its progress, so that the tempest may be upon it before the port is reached.”

*Lord Bryce.*

## CHAPTER V

### PROGRESS IN THE UNITED STATES

IF WE become more specific and glance at the history of the United States, we shall find abundant ground for optimism in the growth of Christianity in our own country. In 1800 there was one church member in the United States to fourteen of the population. In 1860 there was one in five. In 1890 there was one in four. In 1900 there was one in three. In 1920 there was virtually one in two, there being in the United States today 46,000,000 church communicants.

It is interesting also to study the seating capacity of the churches of the United States. In 1890 the seating capacity was 43,000,000. In 1906 it was 58,000,000. This is an increase of virtually 1,000,000 per year, or thirty-five per cent in sixteen years. In 1916 the seating capacity of our churches had run up to about 72,000,000.<sup>1</sup> At the same annual increase, we would now have a church seating capacity in the United States of about 84,000,000.

In this country we have been building new churches on an average at the rate of eight every day since the opening of the twentieth century, until we have reached the enormous seating capacity just mentioned. It is little wonder that there are some empty benches at some of our church services. It is better to count noses than empty benches. By such a count you would find forty or fifty million of our people in some religious service on a single Lord's day. One difference between the "old time" and the "new

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<sup>1</sup> See The World Almanac.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

time" church is, in the old days it was usually customary to hold but one service on Sunday and the minister would come once in two weeks or once a month. Now we hold four and five, with virtually turn-over congregations every Sunday.

To look in on a Sunday morning church service and count one hundred fifty people present does not tell the entire story. Perhaps a Sunday School of one hundred seventy-five has just been dismissed. A group of fifty or seventy-five young people will gather at seven, and an evening congregation at eight of one hundred twenty-five people. So that some three hundred and fifty or four hundred people have attended a religious service in that church on a single day. We might wish that they would do so, and it might be helpful to do so, but people are not necessarily lost if they do not attend three or four religious services every week.

Some will maintain that we are building too many churches, — increasing seating capacity beyond our need. Protestant church buildings are being launched this year to cost \$10,000,000, \$12,000,000 and even \$20,000,000, and plans for greatly increased seating capacity are being projected. We will soon be building churches in the United States at the rate of ten and twelve a day, and on the foreign field at fifteen and twenty a day. But we can realize the need when we recall the fact that the church constituency in this country alone is now reported at 96,000,000.

Many states now have enough automobiles to put their entire population, — every man, woman and

## PROGRESS IN THE UNITED STATES

child — in their cars at one time and go off, if desired, on a pleasure trip. We still lack some 12,000,000 seatings to accomodate at one time the entire church constituency of this nation. We lack 27,000,000 seatings to accomodate the entire population of our country at church. We seldom need to seat the entire church constituency at a single service, but practically all churches have several events annually that overtax their seating capacity.

Our effort to build a nation without a tax supported church was something entirely new in history. The wisest ecclesiasts of Europe declared it could not be done. But the modern religious passion in America has not only built by its gifts 234,000 churches at a valuation of \$1,736,524,916.00,<sup>1</sup> but is sustaining 200,000 ministers at an annual expenditure of almost \$500,000,000,<sup>2</sup> maintaining and endowing five hundred Christian colleges, countless hospitals and benevolences, pouring some \$41,000,000 into foreign missionary enterprises; and at the same time building new churches at the present rate of eight every day. with an average seating capacity of about four hundred fifty each, and people have been joining these churches for the past five years at the rate of twenty-two hundred per day, and for the past year at the rate of twenty-five hundred every day.

The stock capitalization of the United States Steel Trust is reported at \$868,583,000. This makes the

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<sup>1</sup> Church property 1906 was valued at \$935,942,578. Church property 1916 was valued at \$1,301,393,687. At the same rate of increase property 1922 would be valued at \$1,736,524,916.

<sup>2</sup> This expenditure was \$488,424,000 in 1921.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

Christian Church by far the largest business enterprise in the United States, and with its 200,000 regular ministers together with its volunteer and unsalaried workers, in forces employed, it out-numbers by far any trust or enterprise in the nation. Certainly nothing in history can compare with the triumphant progress of Christianity during the generation in which we live. No workers in the Master's Kingdom have had on the one hand so little to discourage, and on the other so much to inspire as we whose joy and privilege it is to give ourselves to the rapidly advancing cause of our Christ. If we can not be optimistic today, it is either because of our ignorance of the past or of the present achievements of Christianity, or because we are born with pessimistic tendencies. The Year Book of the Churches, 1921-22 points out that of every 106 persons in the United States, ten only have no religious affiliation and ninety-six are affiliated through membership, financial support, attendance or by other ties with some religious body.

The year book gives the total church population as follows:

Protestants .....	75,099,489
Roman Catholics .....	17,885,646
Jewish .....	1,600,000
Latter Day Saints .....	587,918
Eastern Orthodox .....	411,054

Of the protestant constituency, the Methodists number .....	22,171,959
The Baptists .....	21,938,700

It will be observed that both these Protestant bodies



## PROGRESS IN THE UNITED STATES

outnumber the Roman Catholics in this country. There has usually been an apparent discrepancy as already noted between Protestant and Catholic statistics in that the Catholics report their constituency, the Protestants only their communicant members. The foregoing figures reduce all to the basis of constituency.

Comparisons of 1921 totals with United States Religious Census, 1916.

	Churches	Ministers	Members	S. Schools	S. S. Members
1921	233,999	199,331	46,242,130	199,154	23,944,438
1916	227,487	191,796	41,926,854	194,759	19,935,890
Increase for five years	6,537	7,537	4,315,276	4,295	4,008,548

An exact basis of comparison is not available for the growth of the churches for the year 1921 over 1920, but the churches have during the past two years turned their war losses into a decided gain, the gain being clearly more than one million in 1921.<sup>1</sup>

The largest Protestant groups are:

	Members	Constituency
Methodists . . . . .	7,918,557	22,171,959
Baptists . . . . .	7,835,250	20,938,700
Lutherans . . . . .	2,466,645	6,905,598
Presbyterians . . . . .	2,384,683	6,777,112
Disciples . . . . .	1,210,023	3,388,064
Protestant Episcopal . .	1,104,029	3,090,481

The Protestant bodies with a constituency of over a million are:

Methodist Episcopal . . . . .	3,938,655	11,048,234
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<sup>1</sup> Year Book of the Churches, 1921-22.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

South Baptist Convention . . . .	3,199,005	8,957,214
National Baptist Con. (colored)	3,116,325	8,725,710
Methodist Episcopal (South)	2,346,067	6,560,987
Presbyterian U. S. A. (North)	1,722,361	4,822,610
Northern Bap. Convention . . . .	1,253,878	3,510,853
Disciples . . . . .	1,210,023	3,388,634
Protestant Episcopal . . . . .	1,104,029	3,090,481
Congregational . . . . .	819,225	2,293,728

The demand for religious reading is also on the increase. In 1880, the circulation of religious journals was 2,091,866 copies; in 1890, the circulation had increased to 4,805,433; in 1920 it had increased to 7,000,928.

MEN IN THE CHURCH

"It is one of the popular fallacies of our times, accepted in no few quarters without anything like thorough investigation, that men do not go to church nowadays. It is readily acknowledged that there is a place for such in the Kingdom of God; that the strongest manhood finds play in this sphere for its loftiest potencies of body, mind, and spirit; that some of the greatest of the sons of men have worn out their noblest forces of personality and power in the divine service and wished that they had a hundred-fold more of capability to dedicate to it. It is freely admitted that while the blessed religion of Jesus Christ is a religion for human weakness, and dependence, and sorrow, and sin, it is also a religion for human strength and valor, and courage and heroism; indeed, for all the athletic faculties of human nature."

*Kerr Boyce Tupper, D. D., LL. D.*

"Do you think that the church is neglected today?" was recently asked Dr. S. Parks Cadman.

"Yes and when was it otherwise? Neglect and persecution have been her lot," he replied, "But she lives and states perish."

*The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Oct. 23, 1922.*

## CHAPTER VI

### MEN IN THE CHURCH

SOMETIMES it is asked, "Why are not men in the church?" The answer to the question is, men are in the church, and they are to be found in the church in ever increasing ratios. The Government Census Bureau for 1906 shows that 43.1 per cent of all church members are men. In the Catholic Church practically half the communicants, according to this report, are men, — 49.3 per cent.

In not a few of our leading city congregations, more men may be found in attendance than women. This is reported true of Tremont Temple, Boston; of Madison Square Presbyterian Church, New York City; of the Baptist Temple, Brooklyn. A few years ago I worshipped in the Auditorium, Chicago, where Gunsalus used to hold forth, and there were evidently more men than women in the audience.

Men have only recently come into their own in church work. A generation ago there were few brotherhoods, no Men's Bible classes, or great conventions of men for the purpose of considering church efficiency and for formulating world-wide religious programs. Now governors and lawmakers, bankers and editors, high school and university professors — the leaders of our nation — are on our church boards and teaching in our Sunday Schools.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

In 1915 a laymen's missionary convention was undertaken in Chicago. It was started with considerable misgivings, but paid registrations reached the astonishing enrollment of 4,556 men. It was freely predicted that this record could not be surpassed, but the next year at Los Angeles another was undertaken and the paid registrants reached 6000 men, many of whom had travelled across the Continent to reach the seat of the Convention.

The first attempt at national missionary conventions was during the year 1909-10 when conventions were held in 70 cities with paid registrations of 70,408. Ten years later in 69 cities the paid registrations were 101,927 — a gain of forty-two per cent. The number of laymen who made addresses, and assisted in such movements as the New Era and the Centenary is entirely beyond accurate estimation.

The religious census of the present Congress gives 258 actual church members out of 435 congressmen and only 121 who failed to report some church affiliation. Of 96 senators there are 58 who are church members and only 27 who fail to give some church affiliation. As this shows a considerably higher ratio than that of the church membership compared with the entire population, it would indicate that voters regard church membership as evidence of character, or at least as fitness for office.

Only a short time ago the Social Service Department of the Congregational churches published the result of a survey. It deals with different phases of church attendance, but within the bounds of the

## MEN IN THE CHURCH

survey which included Tennessee, Missouri, Kansas, New York, and Maine, it indicates that: Of men with college training, only three per cent in the whole survey are reported as non-churchgoers; of high school training, only ten per cent; of common school training, only twenty-six per cent, and of the illiterate, sixty-one percent. The report places emphasis upon the fact that lodges and other societies do not seem to draw persons away from the church services. It was found that the large proportion of men who are active in other social organizations are also active in the church. Only twenty-one per cent of those active in the lodge or grange were found not active in the church.

A leading church paper recently printed the following as indicating the religious activities in which men engage. A study of 700 men's classes in the Northern Baptist Convention shows: "One hundred and sixty-eight report participation in the general religious work of the church including the "every-member" canvass," 26 conduct evangelistic services, 21 educational programs, 168 social service studies, 25 community service, 14 conduct lecture courses, 25 athletic games, 30 interested in civic affairs, 4 have assumed specific financial burdens of the church, 10 provide public programs of debate and entertainment, 5 conduct weekly forums, 3 in welfare work, 1 in Americanization work, 5 have employment bureaus, 20 engaged in benevolent work, 2 have personal work teams, 8 have systematic sick visitation, 6 have gospel teams, 13 help in boys' work, 2 active in law enforcement

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

and 560 have regular Bible-study classes.'"<sup>1</sup> This list not only shows what men are doing, but points out also how varied are the activities of modern Christianity.

We drop into the habit of carelessly thinking that our young men are not religious, that they are not to be found in the church. A study of the problem clearly shows that such impressions are not well founded.

This is the young man's age in religion, as well as along other lines of service and influence. In a recent Epworth League Rally, one thousand young people crowded into the largest available auditorium and still there were four hundred who could not get in, to make up an over-flow meeting. The National Convention of the Baptist Young Peoples' Union recently held in St. Paul, reached the astounding enrollment of 9,000. There are twenty times as many young men in our churches now as there were church members all told at the opening of the nineteenth century. There are about 20,000,000 young men in the country between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five. Of these over 8,000,000 are in our churches. From these figures, it would appear that just about as large a ratio of our young men are in our churches as any other class of our population. Consider in this connection also the male youth connected with our Sunday Schools with their 24,000,000 members, with the Salvation Army with its 11,000 corps, the Gideon Movement with its thousands of young travelling men, the Young Men's

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<sup>1</sup> Northwestern Christian Advocate.



## MEN IN THE CHURCH

Christian Association with nearly 1,000,000 members. For the year 1921, the Young Men's Christian Association reports a total attendance upon Bible and religious meetings of 8,880,800, an increase over 1920 of 738,723. The number of church members among college students would also indicate that there are as large a per cent of young men in our churches and taking a part in active Christian work as of any other group.<sup>1</sup>

We are too much inclined to make all such comparisons with the total of our population. We fail to remember that there are millions of Protestant children who are too young for church membership. Protestant children below eight or ten should be deducted from the entire population before comparisons are made, if we desire a true ratio of church members and non-church members. Making this allowance, we can safely assert that church membership today is over fifty per cent of the church population. Well meaning men of the very finest gifts and training in all walks of life are waking up to the fact that they can invest their lives nowhere else where they will count so much for human advancement as along the line of some type of religious service. Hence they are uniting with the church and offering their services in greater numbers than ever before known in the history of the Christian religion.

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter X.



A MIRACLE IN BOOK MAKING

“The hundred best books, the hundred best pictures, the hundred greatest strains of music are all in the Bible and are all derived from it.”

*Farrar.*

*The Bible Its Meaning and Supremacy.*

..“Now, by common consent of all the great religious thinkers of our civilization, the supreme religious masterpieces of our cultural tradition are embodied in the unique collection of literature which we term the Bible. The ethical and religious value of the Bible, especially of the Gospels, for the establishment of Christian civilization, cannot be doubted. Other things being equal, a people will be Christian directly in proportion to the attention which they pay to the teachings of Jesus as found in the Bible.”

*Charles A. Elwood.*

*The Reconstruction of Religion.*

## CHAPTER VII

### A MIRACLE IN BOOK MAKING

PERHAPS nothing constitutes a better index to the rapid strides in the advancement of the Church of God than the demand for and spread of Bibles. Much is said about the ignorance of the Bible in these modern days. Fun is made of the answers certain high school and college classes have given about the Bible. There is lamentable ignorance on the part of the public in general about this great literature. But in what particular period in the past, at least so far as America is concerned, did the public know more about the Bible than at the present time? When did college and high school students know so much about it? There was in the past, on the part of a few, a superficial knowledge of the Scriptures that enabled them freely to quote detached texts, but there was little deep and comprehensive knowledge of the true spirit of the Book of Books among the masses of the people.

It is true that when the Bible was first printed in the vernacular English and German, also when Erasmus' Greek translation appeared they were eagerly sought and passionately devoured, but this carries us back ten and fifteen generations. This was a time of spiritual starvation, when, according to the historian Froude, "The Christian religion as taught

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

and practiced in Western Europe consisted of the mass and the confessional, of elaborate ceremonials, rituals, processions, pilgrimages, prayers to the virgin and the saints, with dispensations and indulgences for laws broken or duties left undone. Of the Gospels and Epistles so much only was known to the laity as was read in the church services, and that intoned as if to be purposely unintelligible to the understanding. Of the rest of the Bible nothing was known at all, because nothing was supposed to be necessary. Copies of the Scripture were rare, shut up in convent libraries, and studied only by professional theologians; while conventional interpretations were attached to the text which corrupted or distorted its meaning."

Indeed, this is the age of Bible reading, Bible study, and Bible distribution. Never was there a time when so wide interest was manifested in this Book of Books. Never was there a time when its teachings were so thoroughly wrought into the mind, thought, and ideals of mankind as they are today. The Bible now is studied for every purpose; for devotion, for knowledge, for literary models, for individual and social ideals, for criticism, as never before. Its spirit, ideals, matter, rhetorical figures and allusions may be found in newspapers, magazines, and practically all books worth reading.

It is estimated that at the opening of the nineteenth century, there were not over 4,000,000 copies of the Bible extant in all the world. Indeed, not more than 6,000,000 copies of the Bible had been circulated before 1800. Now there are perhaps over 600,000,000

## A MIRACLE IN BOOK MAKING

copies. That means, if you should divide the entire population of the world into families of three each, there are enough Bibles now scattered over the earth to furnish every family in the world a copy. It may be too much to say of our own country, that there is a Bible in the hands of every man and woman, but it is not too much to say that there is a Bible within the reach of virtually every one in America.

This was not true in the past. Bibles were so few about a century ago, that the inauguration service of a certain Governor of Louisiana was interrupted because a copy of the Scriptures could not be found upon which to take the oath of office. A Catholic missionary finally saved the day by furnishing a copy of the Latin Vulgate and the ceremony was completed, with this borrowed volume printed in a dead language.

The annual sale of the Bible has reached the enormous figure of over 30,000,000. In other words, some seven times as many Bibles are now being sold in a single twelve months as there existed in all the world at the opening of the past century. More Bibles were sold during the first twenty years of the twentieth century than during the first eighteen centuries of the Christian era; perhaps even more than during the first nineteen centuries.

The Bible is now printed in the language of 1,400,000,000, or in the languages of seven-eighths of all the people in the world. In whole and in parts it is now published in about six hundred tongues and dialects, having been put into some seventy-five new

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dialects in the past two decades. A century ago it was printed in about forty versions. This is little short of a miracle in book making, sale and distribution.

The two great Bible Societies, — the British, founded 1804, and the American, founded 1816 — have published and distributed just about 500,000,000 copies of this Book of Books. But this takes no account of the smaller Bible societies. A conference of Home Agency Secretaries, nine in number, held in New York, reported a remarkable advance in the circulation of the Scriptures for 1913. The total figures reached 1,075,459. This takes no account of the general circulation of the American Bible Society in foreign lands, to the trade, or circulation effected by auxiliary and other local Bible societies. The total is an advance of 280,222 in these home agencies over the preceding year.

You could combine the annual sale of the one hundred most popular books in the world, and the sale of the Bible would surpass this combined output. We talk about the "best sellers." No book approaches the Bible as a "best seller." The number of complete Scriptures sold by all Bible Societies and publishers during 1914 was over 32,000,000. Harold Bell Wright is a popular writer. In seventeen years, eight of his publications reached a combined sale of 10,000,000, — less than a third of the sale of the Bible in one year. Because of a large order by the Italian Government of 3,000,000 copies, and of the entrance of our government into the Great War, which increased the sale by 1,000,000, *The Man Without a Country*,



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— by Edward Everet Hale, — has reached a total sale of about 10,000,000 since its publication; that is, about one-third of the Bible's annual sale. The world never before witnessed anything like this in book making and book distribution. The Bible is not only the Book of Books in the sense that it is our greatest and most valuable literary treasure, but it is destined to become the Universal Book, — the one book that is indispensable to every member of the human family.

As we hold in mind — or strive to, for the task is entirely beyond human comprehension — this annual output of from 25,000,000 to 30,000,000 copies of the Bible, it is well to remember the tremendous influence it has exerted in the past, that it has not lost its power, that its influence will widen somewhat in ratio with its increased distribution. To say nothing of its influence through music and painting, note only how it stimulates thought and influences literature.

The Bible has been, and still is, our greatest thought provoker. It has quickened more mental activity than any other and perhaps all other books combined, at least in the realm of Christendom. The literature that has flowed from its pages directly and indirectly has perhaps been as great as that which has been inspired by nature through the natural sciences — and the literature on any one of the sciences, as chemistry, botany, geology, astronomy — will now surpass in volume the combined classics of Greece and Rome. “The Bible has set the Christian world to thinking and kept it thinking for nearly two thousand years. The unpublished literature of the

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Christian pulpit surpasses in volume all the literature of all nations.’’<sup>1</sup> But the miracle of it is that the Bible remains unexhausted and inexhaustible. It is estimated that as many as 300 biographies of Christ have been written in a single generation, and that over 12,000 books have been written in an effort to explain the book of Revelation, and that over 60,000 commentaries have been written on the Scriptures or on parts of them.

An examination of books on Christ, the Bible, and of a religious nature that are coming from the modern press will show that this number is in no measure abated. Lessing declares that “the Scriptures have occupied the mind more than all books, have enlightened more than all books.” Says Robert Louis Stevenson, speaking of the Bible: “Written in the East these characters live ever in the West; written in one province, they pervade the world; penned in rude times, they are prized more and more as civilization advances; product of antiquity, they come home to the business and bosoms of men, women and children in modern days.”

Tennyson quotes from or alludes to its pages some 400 times; Ruskin was one of the very greatest masters of English prose. But according to James Mudge there are 450 Biblical quotations and allusions in *Modern Painters* and 600 in *Fors Clavigena* and there must be many thousand in his entire works. In twenty-four of Bacon’s essays may be found seventy-two allusions to the sacred page. “Shakes-

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<sup>1</sup> Austin Phelps.

## A MIRACLE IN BOOK MAKING

peare, the first literary genius of the world," says Emerson, "the highest in whom the moral is not the predominating element, leans on the Bible; his poetry presupposes it. If we examine this brilliant influence — Shakespeare — as it lies in our mind, we shall find it reverent, not only in the letter of this book, but of the whole frame of society which stood in Europe upon it." Over 500 Biblical quotations and allusions may be found in Shakespeare's works.

The Bible inspired a large number of Browning's finest poems. It inspired Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Wordsworth's *Ode to Immortality*, Byron's Poem on *Darkness*, Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*, Dante's *Inferno*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Bryant's *Thanatopsis*,<sup>1</sup> Whittier's *Eternal Goodness*, and literally hundreds of other productions of the highest literary merit. In the present, as well as in the past, poet, painter, sculptor, musician, historian, orator, statesman, journalist, reformers and authors in every department of literature, turn to the pages of this marvelous book for inspiration, material and for their noblest ideals.

It has been said that the Anglo-Saxon civilization has only two really great books, — the one this civilization made, that is Shakespeare; the other made Anglo-Saxon civilization, that is the Bible. All this means that wherever the English language and English literature go, in a large measure, the spirit and ideals of the Bible go. But the English language is used now by 40 per cent of the human family, and

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<sup>1</sup> See Pattison—"The History of the English Bible" p. 197.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

two-thirds or more of all the great magazines and daily papers of the world are printed in this language.

What this Book has done for our civilization, it now promises, through the marvelous success of the modern missionary movement, to do in a large way for all the peoples of the earth. For its spirit, moral standards and ideals are finding their way into the thought, literature, songs, and all forms of expression of the peoples of China, India, Africa, and the "Isles of the Sea." The marvelous demand for the Bible in these modern times by all nations does not indicate that Christianity is waning, but rather that it is enjoying the largest measure of success of its history, and is now at the threshold of a period of progress and power that we hardly dreamed of in early years.

OPEN HANDED RELIGION

“And He looked up and saw the rich casting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw also a certain poor widow casting in hither two mites. And He said, ‘Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.’”

*Luke 21:1-4*

## CHAPTER VIII

### OPEN-HANDED RELIGION

THE OLD time religion was not generous. There was, to be sure, a certain amount of indiscriminate alms giving, but very little real and intelligent generosity. This lack in the past of open-handed helpfulness so common today, was due to many causes, only two of which need be mentioned. Wealth in the form of money was not abundant, neither was it widely distributed. Moreover the appeal of the church was individualistic. The social appeal and outlook of modern Christianity is essentially a growth of the past fifty years.

Church members today are not only giving liberally for the support of the local church — it was to this that the old-time giving was largely confined — but they are also called upon to support a score of worthy causes. Besides the church budget proper, a church family is now expected to give to the Sunday School, the Young People's Society, the Ladies' Aid, the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, the Women's Home Missionary Society, the General Home and Foreign Missionary Boards, the sustaining and endowment fund of the Church College, the temperance cause, orphanages, hospitals, Old People's Homes; and perhaps also to a local Young Men's, and a Young Women's Christian Association

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and to local associated charities. In these modern times, church people are sustaining all these and many other temporary and incidental interests.

It was freely estimated that of the Great War relief funds, the Red Cross, the Young Men's Christian Association, Knights of Columbus, and Salvation Army—funds approximating a half billion dollars—the Church people gave over seventy-five per cent of the money actually paid in. The Inter-Church movement proved beyond doubt that the real givers are in our churches.

If private fortunes have increased, as they tell us, a thousand-fold in the past hundred years (the largest private fortunes a hundred years ago were about \$250,000.00; they are easily now \$250,000,000.00) and our national wealth has increased by leaps and bounds, Christian giving has at least kept pace. Nothing else has saved us in this industrial age from becoming grossly materialistic.

A few years ago, a thousand dollar gift for a church enterprise was regarded generous. Now, hundred thousand dollar gifts are not at all unusual. When a certain church in New York City was about to erect a new building at an estimated cost of \$4,000,000, the Minister frankly declared "the needed amount could not be raised on subscriptions of \$5,000 and \$10,000; it would require subscriptions of \$100,000." Indeed, as such subscription lists usually run, he would need fifteen \$100,000 subscriptions and at least ten \$50,000 subscriptions. The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, is



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reported to have given \$1,072,037.00 for benevolent purposes alone during the year 1916.

A generation ago, a hundred dollar gift to Missions was regarded liberal. We now hear of \$5,000,000 gifts to missions. John Steward Kennedy left a legacy of \$5,000,000 to be equally divided between the Baptist Society and the London Society. Word reaches us at this writing, March, 1922, that Garabed Melkonian, an Armenian, of Alexandria, Egypt, has presented a gift of \$2,000,000 to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

The World's Almanac reported benefactions, not counting gifts below \$10,000, for the years:

1911 .....	\$150,000,000
1912 .....	300,000,000
1913 .....	302,000,000
1914 .....	310,000,000
1915 .....	512,000,000

That is for this particular period of five years, \$1,574,000,000. In other words, the benefactions for this half decade reached a sum greater than the entire wealth of the United States in 1800. This type of benefactions for the past decade will no doubt reach the vast sum of \$3,000,000,000, which is equal to the entire wealth of the United States in 1835. While this sum is not wholly in addition to the enormous expenditure for the up-keep of the church and its benevolences, it is very largely in

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addition to these expenditures; but as the above includes only gifts over \$10,000, it by no means represent the full amount of these general benefactions. The war charities of this country aggregated \$4,000,000,000, and this sum is equal to more than one-half the wealth of the United States in 1850.

We have long talked of the "millionaire," and we are now talking of the possible "billionaire" in regard to private fortunes. But whoever thought, a generation ago, of a possible "billionaire" in giving? But it is estimated that the "Prince of Givers"—Mr. Andrew Carnegie—made donations aggregating almost \$700,000,000 including his bequests and residue of the estate. John D. Rockefeller has done nearly as well. During the fiscal year, 1920-21, the General Educational Board, founded by Mr. Rockefeller, appropriated \$18,210,000 for Colleges and Universities, \$12,029,000 for medical schools, and \$646,000 for negro schools. Since it was founded, this single board has appropriated \$100,000,000.

The wealth of the United States is now estimated at from \$350,000,000,000 to \$400,000,000,000.<sup>1</sup> At least \$150,000,000,000 of that amount is in possession of church people, and never was there a time when wealth was so freely consecrated for benevolent purposes as it is today. Under the fine spirit of our good new time religion, may we not reasonably hope that the time is near, when, like the Wise Men of old, we will bring our wealth to the Master's feet,

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter — What of the Future.

## OPEN-HANDED RELIGION

and devoutly ask that He may bless it and use it for the redemption of men.

In regard to a more generous use of wealth for the advancement of Christianity, it is worthy of note that virtually all denominations are stressing "Christian stewardship." This new note is finding expression in religious literature, in the pulpit and in Sunday School instruction. It emphasizes the teaching that we are but stewards of the wealth under our control, that this wealth is a sacred trust, and we are held responsible before God for its use or abuse. This new emphasis is already bearing fruit in increased pastors' salaries, enlarged budgets for local work, and in larger incomes for all General Church Boards.

In a conference of the Denominational Secretaries of Pension and Relief Funds for retired Ministers, which closed June 1, 1922, the report shows that the endowments held for the different phases of the work are in excess of \$65,000,000. During the past year, \$6,000,000 was distributed to 20,500 beneficiaries. One-half of the distributed income was from endowments; the other half came from direct gifts for this purpose. This entire movement belongs to comparatively recent years.

The Presbyterian Church reports gifts to all causes this year of financial stress—1922—amounting to \$47,000,000. Of this amount \$32,000,000 was for congregational expenses, which was \$12,000,000 more than was given for this purpose three years ago. In the last three years, the Presbyterian

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Church has raised and used for its own work \$25,000,-000 more than in preceding years.

The Convention of the Episcopal Church which met at Portland, September, 1922, called for the raising of \$21,000,000 in the next Triennium.

The askings of the Methodist Episcopal Church for its Benevolent Boards alone for 1922 is almost \$23,000,000:

Board of Foreign Missions .....	\$10,500,000
Board of Home Missions and Church Extension .....	10,500,000
Board of Education .....	750,000
Commission on Course of Study .....	40,000
Board of Education for Negroes .....	350,000
Board of Sunday Schools .....	300,000
Board of Temperance .....	150,000
General Deaconess Board .....	45,000
American Bible Society .....	150,000
Board of Hospitals and Homes .....	35,000
Board of Conference Claimants for Aged and Supply Pastors .....	10,000
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$22,830,000

In 1921, this Church gave \$23,000,000 for these general Benevolent Boards, and \$63,000,000 for her own upkeep. In other words, what she gave to outside causes was 37 per cent of the amount she gave for her own maintenance.

In 1910, all North America was giving only about

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\$20,000,000 for Missions. In 1914, this Church had a quota of but \$4,000,000 and paid fifty-one per cent of it. In 1921, as already stated, she actually gave \$23,000,000 to outside causes. Immediately preceding this fine program, this Church also in a single quadrennium had raised \$35,000,000 for her Colleges.

The Year Book of the Churches for 1921-22 reports the giving of the larger denominations as follows:

Methodist Episcopal Church .....	\$85,934,000
Roman Catholic Church .....	75,368,294
Presbyterian Church North .....	47,036,442
Southern Baptist Convention .....	34,881,032
The Protestant Episcopal Church .....	34,873,211
Methodist Episcopal Church South ....	33,859,832
Northern Baptist Convention .....	21,926,143
Congregational Churches .....	21,233,412
Presbyterian Church South .....	12,124,891
Disciples of Christ .....	11,165,391
The Methodist Bodies taken together ..	130,730,479
The Baptist Bodies       "       "       ..	60,788,534
The Presbyterian Bodies   "       "       ..	56,381,170
The Lutheran Bodies       "       "       ..	33,770,710

The curve of giving in the Christian churches has shot upward and, excepting a few fluctuations, it will under the new and better teachings of Christian stewardship, go still much higher. All this bespeaks a better day for Christianity.



A FOUNTAIN OF DEMOCRACY

"Twenty-five years of sane, systematic missionary instruction in our Sunday Schools will forever do away with the great debts carried by our Missionary Boards, multiply by millions the money poured into their treasuries, and increase ten-fold the number of missionaries who are carrying the gospel to those who need it in the home land and in the foreign countries."

*Report of the Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Sunday Schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church: 1908-1916.*



## CHAPTER IX

### A FOUNTAIN OF DEMOCRACY

THE Sunday School is a modern institution. The good old time religion knew little about it. To be sure, its earliest beginnings reach back to 1780, when Robert Raikes first opened his school in Gloucester, England. However for many years it was but little more than an eleemosynary movement, designed to gather neglected children from the street and teach them to read and write. The Sunday School has become our greatest religious force, outside the pulpit itself. This institution did not really come into its own until after the Civil War; that is, with the work and inspiration of the late Bishop Vincent and with the inauguration of the International Lesson System, and the development of the graded system.

Two generations ago the church drew very few members from the ranks of the Sunday School. Now it has become the chief means of recruiting church membership. It would be difficult indeed now to imagine a church of any importance without the singing, the cheer, the inspiration, the joyous, youthful activity to be found in the modern Sunday School. Only those who have witnessed it and have shared in it can in any measure appreciate the happiness this modern institution brings to the children of our age.

The Sunday School is a far greater religious factor

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than many people seem willing to concede. Of course its work is not perfect. At times it may be even crude, but it is far reaching and leaves a definite impress on the individual. Those who are inclined to criticise the crudeness of the work of this institution need to be reminded that a very large per cent of the teachers in the modern Sunday School are taken from college, high school and public school faculties, individuals who have been awarded the highest degrees of scholarship by our colleges and who hold teachers' certificates, and have been selected by school boards because of their fitness in personality, training and character to teach in our public and high schools.

The Sunday School has marvelously improved in the quality of its literature, music, helps, and in the personnel of the teaching force in the past two decades. It is very significant that Dr. W. O. Thompson was re-elected president of the International Sunday School Convention which recently met at Kansas City, and Professor Hugh S. McGill was elected secretary of the International Council of Religious Education, as both these men are educators of national reputation.

The average time spent by the individual in the Sunday School is about eight years—perhaps a little less. There are now 24,000,000 in the Sunday Schools of America. This number will be repeated four and three-fourths times in thirty-five years. In a single generation, therefore, some 114,000,000 children will come under its influence for a longer or shorter time. It will be noted that this is even

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greater than the church constituency as a foregoing statement indicated. The church constituency — is the Sunday School constituency of an earlier age. A sudden drop in the Sunday School of a particular church will appear, other things being equal, in almost the same ratio in the church membership and attendance of that church in about eight years. Just so, a sudden increase in the Sunday School of a church will show a like effect in the church in about eight years.

Of course this vast host now passing through the Sunday School are not thoroughly instructed in religious matters. An hour once a week for an eight year course can not mean thoroughness. It is equivalent to an hour a day running through about five semesters of a school course. But they are taught the fundamentals of morality and religion, the recognition of God, without which, Washington declared, it is impossible to govern a nation. They are taught a reverence for the Bible and often form a love for Bible study that remains with them throughout life. They are taught personal purity and the fundamental principles of morality and good citizenship; — that “Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people.” They are taught many fundamental social principles — that we are our brother’s keeper. They are taught the great truths of the Universal Fatherhood of God and the common brotherhood of man. They are introduced to the missionary spirit, given much information about foreign peoples and interested in their welfare and des-

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

tiny. It is at this point that the public schools and even our colleges have, up to date, been singularly lacking. They have failed to create a proper appreciation of other peoples, to build up a wholesome international mindedness and to impart the world outlook.

We have here a great fountain of democracy. Next to the public school, the Sunday School is our most democratic institution and it has done its full part toward creating a passion for democracy that is now finding an expression in all the Christian nations of the world. This feature of the Sunday School, we think, has been entirely overlooked by the critics of the church. When the history of democracy is finally written, this institution, no doubt, will be given a large measure of credit. For it has impressed upon millions of children in Europe and America the principles of brotherhood at an age when these children were most easily guided, and Christian brotherhood is the highest type of democracy.

Moreover, this institution leads to definite religious results, as may be seen from the fact that though the increase in church membership has been during the past generation nothing less than phenomenal, the Sunday School has furnished about eighty per cent of these members and about ninety-six per cent of the ministers of our protestant churches, or at least, these members and ministers have come up through the Sunday School.

In the above we have had in mind the Sunday Schools of America. But look again. In the World

## A FOUNTAIN OF DEMOCRACY

today there are about 35,000,000 Sunday School members. That means within a generation some 164,000,000 will come under its molding influence. In the tramp, tramp, tramp of the little feet of these millions of children carrying their Bibles — the fountain of life and the sword of the Spirit — may be heard the tread of the mightiest moral and religious force history has known; for, from these ranks will come our school teachers, our professional men, our law makers, our rulers, and our ministers for our future pulpits, in short, our leaders in every walk of life. Their social ideals, outlook upon the world, and moral and religious standards and conduct will have been largely determined by this institution.

The advance in the offerings of the Sunday School to the benevolent enterprises of the church is quite as impressive as the numerical and evangelistic results. The missionary offerings of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School alone in 1907 were \$524,852; in 1915, \$646,988. For Methodists it is convenient to study quadrenniums. 1904-1907 the Sunday School missionary offerings amounted to \$2,157,868. 1908-1911 to \$2,169,464; 1912-1915 to \$2,524,424. Now the Sunday Schools of the Methodist Church have assumed \$2,100,000 per year for a period of five years and are meeting it.

The Sunday School has created a literature all its own. The *Sunday School Times*, the *Sunday School Journal*, papers for the young people, Bible Study helps, books of many descriptions, — this is all modern literature, the quality and volume of which few

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people, except those who have given the matter special attention, have little conception. The Methodist Book Concern alone is now distributing more than a billion pages of Sunday School literature every year and has been known to bind, in a single quadrennium, 1,800,000 copies of religious books and pamphlets. The total number of copies of uniform publications for the quadrennium 1916-1919 was 275,753,196, the number of pages was 3,920,995,075. The circulation of graded material for the same quadrennium was 12,995,136 additional.

Take one denomination as an example of the rapid growth of this institution — the Methodist Episcopal Church. The story of the growth of Sunday Schools of this denomination and the converts that have come from its ranks run into figures that almost stagger belief. Its Board of Sunday Schools was organized in 1908. At that time, the Sunday School membership was 3,347,000. By 1916, the membership had reached 4,598,000 — a gain of 1,252,000, — the most remarkable advance in the history of the Sunday School movement. Take a period of four years, ending 1916; the figures are overwhelming. For this period the average increase in membership was 150,000 and the total number of conversions for the four years was 785,000. In the eight years preceding 1916, there was reported 1,400,000 conversions. Dr. Blake, then the Secretary of the Board, and now Bishop, made the following observation upon its showing: "Methodism has witnessed many remarkable evangelistic achievements, but never one of such immense

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magnitude as this one. It is the greatest in our history. There has never been anything like it since the days of Wesley. The fact stands out with striking force that the Sunday School is the church's greatest evangelistic field and factor. — The man who remains insensible to the evangelistic opportunity of the Sunday School has clearly outlived his evangelistic usefulness. God fulfills Himself in many ways. He opens many doors of opportunity for His people to promote the Kingdom. The open door most conspicuous and most commanding in our day is that of the Sunday School with its offer of young and inspiring hearts, sensitive and susceptible to the voice of God and the play of the Spirit."

With 1916 came the disturbing factor of the Great World War and literally millions of our young people went to the battle fields, the training camps, and to serve in our hospitals. A regular rate of increase in our Sunday Schools, of course, was not possible. But with the return of normal conditions, the same marvelous growth in Sunday School membership again becomes noticeable. The gain in the Methodist Sunday Schools for 1921 is the largest of any single year, with the exception of 1909 and 1915. The net gains for 1921 are as follows:

- 446 in schools
- 7,775 in officers and teachers
- 9,134 in Home Department
- 22,891 in Cradle Roll
- 283,262 in total enrollment
- 232,277 in average attendance

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140,355 in pupils belonging to the church

2,289 in accessions to the church from the Sunday School.

This table shows a gain in attendance alone of nearly a quarter of a million in a single year.

In 1921, 924 adult Bible classes were organized, with a total membership of 29,279.

The Sunday School subscribed \$10,000,000 to the Centenary Fund to be paid in five annual installments. The payments from the Sunday School reached ninety-four per cent of the pledges for 1921, while the church paid but seventy per cent of its pledges.

If modern Christianity had nothing to show but its Sunday School work and achievements for the first twenty years of the twentieth century, this still could be regarded as the Golden Age of Christendom. But in Sunday School work we are not looking toward the West. We are looking toward the East. Its sun is just rising. Its noon-day is in the future. The Golden Age of the Sunday School as to numbers, efficiency in religious instruction, and as a feeder for the future church, is yet to come. A fine cure for religious pessimism is a careful study of this institution in its present condition and in the promise of its future possibilities.



A NEW SOURCE OF RELIGION

“Modern collegiate life is today a wonderful microcosm:— it represents the endeavor of generations of zealous, earnest educators to make this period of youth increasingly profitable. The number and variety of studies have been increased many fold, the proportion of teachers to students has been increased, improved methods of instruction have been brought into play and the equipment of laboratories is lavishly generous. Never before has there been such earnest discussion as to educational methods and values; the teacher’s art has become a science, and he a great power in the land.”

*President T. M. Drown, Quoted from “The American College In American Life.” — Thwing.*

## CHAPTER X

### A NEW SOURCE OF RELIGION

A WELL known Bishop in this country declared that educated mind rules the world, and if Christianity ever gains control, she must establish and maintain colleges where educated minds are trained. Another noted Bishop and educator has exhorted us to "remember that a college education increases a young man's possibilities for reaching eminence, wealth, usefulness, and influence from three hundred and fifty to two thousand fold." Still another: "that he would be ready to match one well trained, consecrated college man against a thousand evil doers."

If these statements are true, or in the measure they may be true, it is interesting to study not only the development of the college, but more especially the growth of church membership and the Christian spirit in our Colleges, particularly in the tax-supported colleges.

It may be worth while to remember that a college education is far more extensive than it was a generation or two ago. We need not go back far to find the colleges giving courses covering but little more ground than that of the modern high school. Education means more today than it did in the early part, or even the middle of the past century.

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Again, larger numbers by far, even as compared with our increase in population, are now receiving a college training. Taking our history as a whole, it has been conservatively estimated that only one out of seven hundred and fifty, — some place the ratio at one out of a thousand — of those who have reached mature age has enjoyed the advantage of a college training. In 1890, this ratio had risen to about one in every three hundred. It is perhaps now about one out of every hundred. Not only has illiteracy practically disappeared, except among our newly arrived immigrants and colored population, but this is an age when young people are flocking to our high schools and colleges in every increasing numbers.

Of the American soldiers who fought the Revolutionary War about one in eight could read. Several regiments in the late war with Spain did not contain a soldier who could not read. The intelligence tests for the World War revealed conditions somewhat disappointing; but we must distinguish between the capacity for intelligence and literacy. Schools are not responsible for individual intellectual capacity. This, according to these tests is low among great masses of our people, but literacy is wide spread.

The State University, or tax supported University is a modern institution, virtually a product of the last seventy-five years. Note the rapid growth in these institutions, doubling every decade:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The increase in high school attendance is even more marked. From 1890 to 1920 this increase was over 900 per cent. This represents a rate of increase of almost fourteen times that of the growth in population.

## A NEW SOURCE OF RELIGION

In 1870, there were 6,000 students in these institutions;

in 1880 .....	12,000
in 1890 .....	22,000
in 1900 .....	45,000
in 1910 .....	101,000
in 1920 .....	200,000
in 1922 .....	240,000

These students have not been attracted from the church supported and private colleges and universities. While the increase in these schools has not been so phenomenal, it has been regular and at times remarkable. The enrollment of the Methodist Episcopal Colleges for the same period ran as follows:

in 1870.....	7,000
1880.....	10,000
1890.....	20,000
1900.....	30,000
1910.....	37,000
1920.....	40,000

### Private institutions

in 1890.....	60,000
1900.....	75,000
1910.....	120,000
1920.....	160,000

In 1860, there was but a single college in the United States with an enrollment of over five hundred. In 1915, there were a hundred colleges with an enrollment above one thousand, twelve with an enrollment above five thousand, and one at least with an enrollment of over fourteen thousand. But look

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again. In 1921 there were nine colleges with over ten thousand students each, five with over twelve thousand and one with 25,734, and with a faculty of one thousand five hundred and six. Three colleges in New York City are reported to have a combined enrollment of fifty thousand students.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is not the increase in college students to which we wish to direct especial attention, but the increase of the Christian spirit, and the ever increasing ratio of church members among these students. Here is a new source of religious influence and it promises in the near future to greatly accelerate religious progress.

In the early history of our country, the religious condition in our colleges was deplorable. They counted practically nothing in religious influence. At Princeton, in 1782, but two students were reported who confessed Christianity.<sup>1</sup> At Hampden Sidney College, 1787, of a student body of eighty, not one was known to be in any way serious upon the subject of religion. The situation at Dartmouth was no better. Of Yale, it was said that French infidelity enthroned intemperance, dueling and suicide, and a type of immorality that succeeded in wiping out all sacredness of the ties between men and women. In 1792 John H. Church is said to have been the only professor of religion in the four classes of Harvard. An examination of all the colleges of America at that period will reveal a similar state of affairs.

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<sup>1</sup> The World Almanac.

<sup>2</sup> Edwin N. Hardy—"The Church and Educated Men," p. 54.

## A NEW SOURCE OF RELIGION

Note the following observation of the condition of the colleges of this early day: "For the years from 1770 to 1820 the religious life in the American colleges sank so low that it might be called the 'Dark Age of Religion.'"<sup>1</sup> "Never was a period in history of the higher education when the principles and vices, which are frequently denominated 'French' had so large an influence among American students as the opening of the century. The records show that the students of that time were defiant of authority, in conduct immoral, and in religion skeptical."<sup>2</sup> "What was usually called infidelity was fashionable and prevalent in almost every college. It was a common remark that certain students of Yale at this time (about 1810) were calling themselves by the names of conspicuous free-thinkers of France. Writing of Williams College, one says: 'French liberty and French philosophy poured in upon us like a flood; and seemed to sweep everything serious before it. . . . Coarse dramatic exhibitions, terrific outbursts of rowdyism, bombastic display of contempt of the Christian religion, seem to have been the rule. A wave of immorality and irreligion had for a time submerged all the colleges.'"<sup>3</sup>

The period of the next fifty years shows improvement, but the religious life of colleges still remains extremely low. An examination of a dozen of the leading American colleges of 1825 will show about twenty per cent of the student body confessing

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<sup>1</sup> Edwin N. Hardy—"The Church and Educated Men," p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Charles F. Thwing—"American College in American Life," p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Charles F. Thwing—"American College in American Life," p. 10.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

Christians. An examination of a dozen colleges in 1850 will show thirty-three per cent confessing Christians. In 1860 about forty-seven per cent would be found who were open in their confession of the Christian religion.

But from this time on the condition rapidly changes. In 1900, an examination of thirty-two colleges showed sixty-five per cent of the men in the senior class Christians. Note the following table for 1901:

*Number of Colleges Reported: Per cent Christians:*

Undenominational	13.....	36
Congregational	14.....	77
Presbyterian	3.....	90
Methodist	7.....	74
State Universities	5.....	45

The average in these forty-two colleges is seventy-four percent, but this percentage has been gradually rising for the past twenty years. Well can it be claimed that this is the "Golden Age" in the Christian life of Colleges.

From reported statistics as late as the year 1921, it appears that about 75 per cent of the students of State institutions, a somewhat higher per cent at private institutions, and a still higher per cent in denominational colleges are affiliated with Christian churches. The average is about 82 per cent.

Moreover, Christianity must be given a large measure of credit for creating the present American passion for education. The whole post-Reformation period has been one of mental quickening and illum-



## A NEW SOURCE OF RELIGION

ination. The Master Teacher, Jesus, assured us that it was the office of his spirit to guide us into all truth. The Wesleyan movement was not only a revival of religion, it quickened a greater love for knowledge. Out of it came the Sunday School, and the Sunday School according to the English historian Green, was the forerunner of popular education. Many of our great universities are the direct outgrowth of religious awakenings; every local revival sends students to our colleges. A true revival of religion quickens the entire personality, and often one of the most pronounced evidences of this awakening is a new desire to know and a decision to acquire an education. It is from the Christian Church — from Christian homes that come the vast numbers of students to our colleges and universities. Our non-churched communities and non-churched portions of our population send comparatively few young people to college. The Methodist Episcopal Church alone in 1922 sent over 100,000 students from its constituency to college. From the church homes of eight denominations, 120,000 went this year to our State Universities alone — fully one-half of the entire enrollment. These eight denominations represent one-sixth of our population. So, besides the vast number of students in their own denominational schools, they furnish one-half of the enrollment of our State Colleges.

In the United States, there are now just about one hundred publicly supported state and municipal colleges. They enroll over a quarter of a million students. It has been our national policy that state and

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church should be separate. But what was wisely intended as a safeguard has often been interpreted to mean that religious instruction should not be given in these institutions. For the interests of religion, this attitude for a time threatened to lead to deplorable results. But the church holding the firm conviction that education can not be complete without religion has hastened to repair this defect. It is founding in connection with these universities, chairs for Biblical and religious instruction.

Student pastors and special teachers are being supported by a single denomination or by the co-operation of a number of denominations. Often regular college credits are awarded for this work. These institutions are coming more fully to recognize their obligation to furnish ethical and religious instruction, as well as the physical and intellectual disciplines. Hence this work is growing in favor with educators, and is being heartily encouraged by Christian sentiment in general. But this may be but a transitional movement opening up the way by which this service may be rendered more directly by the college authorities. Thus the prediction of H. G. Wells of the approach of a closer alliance between religion and education may be fulfilled. We are at least well on the way to solve this glaring defect in our tax-supported institutions of the almost complete lack of direct religious instruction.

Take the work of a single denomination — that of the Presbyterian as an example — there are forty-two

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university centers to which this church is making appropriations.

The following statistics are for a university where there has been a Presbyterian university pastor for six years: Of the first 12,706 graduates of the university, only 47 entered the ministry of all denominations. Since the Presbyterian university pastorate was established, 25 Presbyterian students have become ministers, 32 missionaries, and four others are under appointment. Except during war times, there have been about twelve Presbyterian candidates for the ministry each year in the university, and the Presbyterian Student Volunteers have averaged about forty.

The following table is compiled from the programs of the 1919, 1920 and 1921 conferences for outgoing missionaries, printed by the Board of Foreign Missions:

	1919	1920	1921
"Total outgoing missionaries .....	116	121	99
Number who are graduates of State institutions .....	28	19	21
Additional number who took gradu- ate work in State institutions ..	7	7	8

Within a year graduates of one Agricultural College have sailed as missionaries for India, Burma, and Syria, and another has entered a Theological Seminary."

In the institutions where the Methodist Episcopal Church is maintaining definite work, sixty-seven Methodist students are considering the ministry and a hundred and sixty-two men and women are con-

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templating foreign service. For many years, these publicly supported institutions have furnished virtually no leaders for our churches. Through the influence of the religious programs the several denominations are setting up in these institutions, they promise from their ever increasing student bodies to furnish their full quota of ministers and Christian workers and thus fully meet what has been a diminishing ministerial supply.

It is a hopeful sign that this need is so clearly recognized and so frankly acknowledged, and that careful study is being given to the problem by leaders in both the church and educational circles.

Education of the future promises to contain more of the moral and religious emphasis, and even our tax supported colleges promise to become fountains of religious inspiration and progress. There are no signs of a break between Christianity and the educated classes — but instead there is every indication that trained leaders from our colleges in ever increasing numbers will give themselves to the task of advancing the Master's kingdom.

If the modern church did no more than to inspire these hundreds of thousands of young people of clean life, lofty ideals and noble aspirations to go to college, there to receive a training to fit them for leadership in the many branches of our modern life, it would be exerting a tremendous influence on the destiny of the human race.

Shortly before his death, Dwight L. Moody said: "From a religious point of view, I look upon the college as the most hopeful field in the world." And

## A NEW SOURCE OF RELIGION

John R. Mott has pronounced: "The colleges and universities are the most religious communities in the country." Nicholas Murray Butler: "Parents generally are coming to see that when a boy leaves home, as he must, there is on the whole no place where he is so safe as in college, and that if a thousand young men be selected at random from the college, and compared with a thousand young men of corresponding ages, selected at random from those not in college, the conditions of the college man, the two groups being taken as wholes, will be found immensely more favorable to the best results than those of the other class."

It begins to appear that Christ is destined to have the trained intellect of America, at least, and this can well nigh rule the world. No one would care to contend that the religious conditions in our colleges today are ideal, but it has certainly improved over conditions of even twenty years ago, and very greatly improved over conditions that prevailed early in the nineteenth century, or just before the Civil War. This change of religious attitude and influence has been particularly noticeable in our tax supported institutions during the past dozen years.



## STUPENDOUS REVIVALS

"It is not too much to say that the evangelical revival taught the world's democracy how most effectively to become audible. This side of the movement has a long and interesting history going back to Wickliffe and his Lollard monks, and from them to their teachers the Waldesion lay preachers. But the full flower of the movement only bloomed in the fullness of time when English democracy was moved and molded by Wesley and Whitfield by Ingham and John Nelson."

*Thomas Cuming Hall, D. D., Professor of Christian Ethics in Union Theological Seminary.*

*From his article in "Christ and Civilization."*



## CHAPTER XI

### STUPENDOUS REVIVALS

WE WILL not here make a plea for the old time revival, for the spectacular in religious work, but will point out that our "new time" religion has witnessed the stupendous, as well as the spectacular in revival work; and will also make some observations on modern evangelism. However, every student of religion must recognize the value of the old time "special meeting." They served their age and served it well, and they paved the way for the better methods and larger results of our age.

But even the emotional and spectacular revival has not passed. To be sure they are not so general as a generation ago. This generation, in many respects, is the golden age of such revivals. We marvel at the power of Jonathan Edwards, Timothy Dwight, Whitfield, Finney, Dwight L. Moody, and other great outstanding religious leaders; and while conscious of their limitations, permit ourselves to think that they are not now having, and perhaps have not had for the past two decades, any successors. But in fact their works are not only duplicated, but far surpassed by more modern evangelists. The Welsh revival under Evan Roberts belongs to this age, and there have been few revivals in history more sweeping or more deeply impressive. Bederwolf, Audens-

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child, French Oliver and scores of others have won real victories as revivalists during the past twenty years. The late Wilbur Chapman spoke to as many people and had as many converts as Moody. Gypsy Smith's work has been felt in two continents. The late B. Fay Mills is estimated to have won 500,000 souls, — the number of Christian adherents at the end of the first century was but 500,000! In "Acts" we learn that after Peter's great sermon following Pentecost, that some 3,000 believed.

The Young Men's Christian Association has done some excellent evangelistic work. In 1917 this Association at Los Angeles penetrated every corner of that city with the evangelistic message. That year over 50,000 persons were reached with the message in all sorts of places, in the city and county jails, in the city chain gang, in manufacturing and railroad plants, in open air meetings and elsewhere.

Recent reports from the Presbyterian Church state that seventeen Presbyteries alone, with seven hundred and fifty seven churches, will employ twenty-four full time evangelists and three hundred visiting ministers in special efforts at soul-winning. These same reports show that during 1921, 2,000 persons united with the Presbyterian Church each week on confession of faith, or 285 each day of the year.

At this writing comes this account of a revival in Scotland: "A great revival is in progress in Scotland which is stirring the country from one end to the other, more than 20,000 conversions having been reported to date among various denominations. The

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leader of the movement is Gock Trup, a young man of splendid physique who was converted only five years ago. This youth has a wonderful power in quoting Scripture and does it with purpose. His own position in the revival which has already registered more conversions than the total of the great "Welsh Revival" of 1904 is as much a surprise to himself as to any other person."

But note the work of the modern miracle of this type of emotional evangelism and mass appeal,—Billy Sunday. Our purpose is neither to condemn nor advocate his methods. We are fully aware of the fleeting character of much of the seeming results. But this is partly true also of the results of the old time revivalist. One needs not go far back into the literature of Methodism, when this church was operating under the rule of the six months' probation, to discover that the old time method by no means gathered all the seeming results. As high as seventy and even ninety per cent of those who joined churches on probation not infrequently dropped out before the six months' period had expired under the old methods of work. The writer recalls a revival at which ninety joined the church on probation and but two were received in full connection six months' later.

But note the reported results of Mr. Sunday's meetings. At Kansas City, Missouri, a hundred special trains were arranged for to bring the people as far as two hundred miles to attend the services. No building in the city could be secured or con-

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structed large enough to accomodate the immense crowds that attended. In Baltimore, Mr. Sunday preached to 24,000 people in his concluding service. It is reported that about 20,000 on a certain occasion, gathered in an open air meeting to hear George Whitfield. At the four services of the last day of this Baltimore meeting, Mr. Sunday addressed 96,000 people. In Boston the number of "trail hitters" reached the astounding total of 63,484. The number who signed cards was 48,903, distributed as follows: Baptists 11,845, Methodists 7,104, Congregationalists 6,195, Episcopalians 3,275, Presbyterians, 3,282, Evangelical 128, Christians 118, Friends 70, Catholics, 1,513, Lutherans 892, Unitarians 296, Universalists 128, Christian Science 239, Hebrews 177; besides this thousands undesignated. The free will offering to Mr. Sunday was \$55,000.

Note this item from one of our Advocates, March 7, 1917, in regard to the preparation for the coming of Billy Sunday: "The tabernacle in New York will seat 20,000,—as many as can be reached by the human voice—but it is predicted on the first night, when the doors open, 100,000 people will be standing outside to get in. The crowd will be handled by 500 ushers. Three choirs will be trained, consisting of 6,000 persons, so that a choir of 2,000 may be maintained and always have fresh voices." Later it was reported that this mission closed with 98,264 "trail hitters" and a free will offering of \$110,000.

One fault with the old time revival was, it was too individualistic. It contained little of the social

## STUPENDOUS REVIVALS

appeal and often did little to correct public morals. But Mr. Sunday is given credit for having determined 25,000 votes for prohibition in Colorado and was a large factor in making the state dry—He had a like influence also in Michigan. Andrew Gillies, makes this estimate of Mr. Sunday's work: "The social and civic results of his work are beyond calculation. Whole cities experienced moral renovations. Wide areas undergo revivals of business honesty and personal purity. And whole states are swept clean of that pest of modern life, the legalized saloon."<sup>1</sup> It is as true today as in the past that nothing will draw people in such crowds as a really spirited religious meeting.

If we must build the church by the method of the mass appeal, it can be done today with as large a measure of success as in the past. But we think we have discovered a more excellent way.

The better features of the old time revival, no doubt will be and should be resorted to in the future. By its use in a modified form at least it is still possible to reap real fruitage. A new and better method need not immediately crowd aside the old. But there can be no harm in frankly recognizing the limitations and faults of the older method. The old method paid little attention to religious instruction. It had little appreciation of the principles of psychology involved. It was too exclusively an effort on the part of churches to gain members. It necessarily entered communities where little or no preparation had been

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<sup>1</sup> Methodist Review.

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made. The instructive factor in the preaching was also singularly lacking. The sermon was but little more than an earnest, passionate appeal for immediate decision and action. Notwithstanding, it is to the very great credit of these earnest workers that they accomplished so much of real and permanent value. These evangelists of the early day simply did their best with the tools at their command, and midst conditions under which they were compelled to work. We will do well if we are able to match their earnestness, their fervor, their passion for the redemption of men.

The point here emphasized is that the modern church though it is adopting new methods, has by no means, lost the evangelistic passion; and it is far better equipped for its work. Attention is also called to the term used. The older work was best described by the term "revivalism"—a sort of "explosive outburst of Christ's Kingdom." Much of its effort was spent in awakening, 'reviving' and reclaiming the backslider, and it was success here rather than the actual gains to the church that often made the results seem so striking,

"Evangelism" is the better term for the modern passion and effort. The problem of evangelism—the problem the modern church has set itself—is an extremely complex one. It includes revivalism, but far more. It has to do with the awakening of interest, with the Christian appeal, with Christian education or nurture, with the effective use of Biblical truth and the fitting of this truth to the peculiar

## STUPENDOUS REVIVALS

needs of this new age, and with the promulgation of the gospel not only in the home land, but in all lands. Modern evangelism sets itself the large task of making Christianity effective, not only in the conversion of the individual, but in the development of both the individual and society to their highest possibility. It stands "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the Unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."<sup>1</sup> Its aim also is to establish that new Kingdom—the new heavens and the new earth—wherein shall dwell, socially and internationally, righteousness and brotherhood.

Evangelistic work today includes a hundred and one things hardly thought of two generations ago. And this is true of the foreign field as well as of the home field. Even in the foreign field, among untaught peoples, the earlier missionary effort was largely revivalistic. It is now evangelistic. It concerns itself with the entire life of the individual and community. It interests itself in manual training, agriculture, sanitation, hospitals, dispensaries, schools, with social conditions, in short with the entire well being of the people, as well as in the religious instruction and religious appeal.

It is a long step from that of simply calling a single soul to repentance, to the full redemption of that soul both as an individual and as he is related to

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 4:12-13.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

society. It is a long step from simply making an appeal for new members for a local church, to that of making that church effective in building up the local community life, and in carrying its full share of the redemption of the heathen world. Modern evangelism is pledged to this larger task. Its work is not so spectacular. It is deeper and far more comprehensive. It is devoted to the study of child nature with the thought of intelligently fitting itself to the child's need, and does much of its work through the Sunday School. Along with the declaration of the gospel, it gives itself to a study of individual and social psychology and is thus saved from much of the crude work of the past. It gives attention to the correction of social wrong, and the improvement of social conditions with a view of helping to make possible wholesome Christian living.

Not only does it include many things that were left out by the old evangelism, — it has lost interest in things that engaged the thought and energies of our fathers. It is wasting little time in antagonizing other denominations, but seeks co-operation with all recognized branches of Christianity in the world task of building the Master's kingdom. The battle now is not so much between Protestantism and Catholicism, or between Calvinism and Arminianism, or the Methodists and the Disciples. It is between sin and righteousness. "The weightier matters of the law have finally gotten their chance against the



## STUPENDOUS REVIVALS

tithed mint, anise and cummin of a sectarianism which passed for religion.”<sup>1</sup>

With a full, rich, authentic New Testament evangel, modern evangelism has wheeled into line ‘with contemporary life.’ It does not fear to use modern agencies. It is looking to psychology and social science for guidance without breaking with the Bible, for truth and inspiration. It fully appreciates the bigness of the task with all its immense and intricate complexities, and it is supplementing, not discarding, the old evangelism with all the weapons of this new age in an effort to master that task. That task is not mere revivalism but the full realization of the ideals of Jesus for both the individual and society, and the realization of these ideals for all peoples the world around. This kind of evangelism is prevalent and growing in all the great denominations.

The chief point to be made here, however, is that evangelistic results, by whatever method, are greater today than ever before in the history of the Christian Church; that the better features of the old revivalism may still be effectively used; that we need not look to the past alone for sweeping victories. The present decade has witnessed triumphs along every line of religious endeavor of a character little dreamed of by the great revivalists of the earlier day. Can it be that the church is just entering upon its

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop William Fraser McDowell—“The New Age and Its Creed” p. 136.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

Golden Age in Sunday School work, in evangelistic passion and activity and in missionary conquest all at one time?

THE ONGOINGS OF HISTORY

"No phenomena in history are more marked, nor probably more fraught with significance, than the change which in the last century — it might be truly said within the last twenty-five years — has come into the thought of the Christian Church with reference to Missions. The Missionary enterprise is now a common enthusiasm of Protestantism."

*George P. Maines.*

*"Christianity and the New Age."*

"Any social order that is to endure must be built on a world-wide scale. It follows that a social religion must be a missionary religion, carrying enlightened social values, social patterns, civilization as it has been developed to all peoples. It was no accident, therefore, that Jesus, if his religion was truly social and humanitarian, as we have argued, commanded his followers to go and make disciples of all nations. Neither is it an accident that historical Christianity at its best has always been a missionary religion."

*Charles A. Ellwood,*

*"The Reconstruction of Religion."*

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ONGOINGS OF HISTORY

**F**OREIGN missions, so far as they have been promoted by American churches, are, for the most part, a work of the past one hundred years. The Methodist Episcopal Church first engaged in this branch of religious activity in 1819. Its recent Centenary movement was a celebration of this event. It was not till 1813 that the English Parliament allowed Missionaries to go to India. The American Board was founded 1810, the Baptist Board 1814, the Protestant Episcopal Missionary Society 1820, the United Presbyterian Missionary Society 1859. It is not too much to say that the real success of foreign missions belongs to the past generation, and today, missionary activity marks the chief ongoing of history. To obey the divine command "Go teach all Nations" has become the leading passion of the modern church.

From 1650 to 1800, a period of one hundred fifty years, twelve missionary societies were formed. From 1800 to 1830, a period of thirty years, twenty-two were formed,—that is almost twice as many in thirty years as in the previous hundred and fifty years. Now watch these societies grow:

1830 to 1840 .....	16
1840 to 1850 .....	25
1850 to 1860 .....	34

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1860 to 1870 .....	41
1870 to 1880 .....	57
1880 to 1890 .....	92
1890 to 1900 .....	100

In 1880 the income in all missionary treasuries was \$75,000. In 1900 the income of all treasuries was \$19,000,000. In 1920 it was \$40,000,000. In 1600, seven per cent of the territory of the world was controlled by Christian nations; in 1900, eighty-two per cent of the territory of the world was controlled by Christian nations. In 1921, \$56,000,000 was given for Protestant missionaries all told. The United States and Canada gave \$41,000,000, England gave \$12,000,000, the remainder of Europe \$3,000,000.

Note the following table indicating gifts to Missions in the United States and Canada:

1900 .....	\$6,000,000
1904 .....	8,000,000
1908 .....	10,000,000
1910 .....	12,000,000
1912 .....	15,000,000
1915 .....	18,774,000
1916 .....	20,405,000
1917 .....	20,437,000
1918 .....	22,182,000
1919 .....	30,872,000
1920 .....	40,204,595

During the four years from 1898 to 1902, seven hundred eighty volunteer students sailed for the foreign field. During the next four years one thousand sailed. During the next four years twelve hun-

## THE ONGOINGS OF HISTORY

dred eighty, and during the next, ending with 1914, two thousand sailed.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were about 50,000 heathen converts. At the beginning of the twentieth, about 3,000,000. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were no open doors to the heathen field. At the beginning of the twentieth, there were no closed doors—all barriers had been broken down, and heathen lands were inviting the coming of the missionary. As one has expressed it: "At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was an occasional outpost at some strategical point. At the beginning of the twentieth, there were ten thousand batteries at as many strategical points."

But the real missionary progress has been made during the first twenty years of the twentieth century. "In the entire heathen world the number of employed missionaries from Christian lands approximates about 21,500, to which are to be added 105,000 native workers. The direct fruitage of missionary efforts in the fields occupied is represented by more than 7,000,000 living native Christians." Had the Church of God nothing to show to its credit for the past fifty years but its missionary conquests, these alone would constitute a real marvel in religious history.

Sherwood Eddy in a visit to China, 1915, spoke in twelve cities to 121,000 members of the educated classes, admitted by ticket only, in an effort to reach the leaders of China. As a result, seven thousand high officials, scholars, and ruling gentrymen, who

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

practically hold the destiny of the nation in their hands, turned to Christianity and are now enrolled in classes for Bible study.

The first missionary conference in China was held in 1877. At that time the communicant strength numbered less than 14,000. In 1890, when the second great conference convened, the Protestant Church membership had increased threefold (37,287). By 1907, when the third great conference was held, thirty years after the first conference, an increase of thirteen fold was reported. When the National Christian conference met in May, 1922, the numbered communicant strength of the Protestant Church in China approximated 375,000. This is over four-fold the strength of the church twenty years ago, to say nothing of the great increase in native leadership, large Christian institutions and the influence of the Christian Church, all of which are beyond the power of figures and words to describe.

“Because of an absurdly inadequate missionary force,” writes Bishop Frank W. Warne concerning India, “we have had to deny admission into the Methodist Church a waiting list in India alone of 160,000 hungry souls. In addition to this, the people who are just beginning to turn to Christ number 500,000 to 1,000,000. In the caste in which the mass movement is spreading, there are 11,000,000 and the total community among whom the movement is working numbers 50,000,000.”

The significance of this waiting list of 160,000, with over 500,000 just turning, will become apparent when



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it is remembered that there were only 500,000 followers of Christ at the end of the first century's efforts. Another writes: "Churches are packed to the doors in Mexico. In previous times, the annual sale of the Bible and parts of the Bible reached, as a high-water mark, 22,000. The sale for the year 1915 reached 63,000, and Missionaries state that tens of thousands more could have been sold had works been available. Bishop Stuntz, referring to South America, recently declared: "Never in the history of the Continent have so many converts been gathered together as have been in the past year." And thus the story runs in every kindred tribe and tongue in which missionary effort is being carried on.

In 1907, the Presbyterian communicants on the foreign field numbered 70,477; in 1917, there were 161,470; in 1922, the native church members numbered 196,175.

The recent Baptist convention held June 14-20, 1922, at Indianapolis, reported that: "In Africa an evangelistic ingathering has been taking place which has served to recall the historic Pentecost on the Congo, thirty-five years ago. The Burma Mission reports 4,783 baptisms during the year, making a total church membership of 73,653. One of the most encouraging reports comes by cablegram from the new field north of Kentung, Burma, across the Chinese border, where since January 1, 1922, more than 2,500 converts have been baptized. Missionaries in Assam have written of unusually large accessions of church membership. India never seems to have

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

been so wide open to the gospel as it is today. Letters from Russia reveal an astonishing growth in Baptist churches there. According to the estimate of Russian leaders, the proposed union of the two Baptist bodies now known as the All-Russian Baptist Union and the All-Russian Evangelical Christian Union, would constitute the second largest Baptist body in the world, with about 2,000,000 members.”<sup>1</sup>

The Methodist Episcopal Church enjoyed during the year 1921, in the foreign field, the largest increase by far ever reported — 37,520. This increase is more than double the average increase for the three years — 1917, 1918, 1919. During the same year, one hundred seventy-five new missionaries were sent abroad. There are 1,386 native preachers who are full members of the conferences, which is an increase of 138 over the preceding year; 284 natives are in preparatory membership in the conferences, an increase of 78. There are 18,377 other preachers and workers, which means the remarkable increase of 3,406 in a single year. There are 10,734 Sunday Schools, an increase of 541 in the year, with 491,233 scholars, an increase of 39,186. The report for this year (1922) also shows an increase of 122 churches. The financial strength of the foreign work of this denomination is shown by the fact that \$2,919,609 was raised for self-support.

At the Cleveland Missionary Convention, 1902, Bishop Andrews made the following fine contrast:

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<sup>1</sup> Much attention is also now given to the study of Missions. Thousands of people are organized in what are called mission study classes. In 1921 the Presbyterian Church thus had an enrollment of 137,849. 1922 saw an enrollment of 179,630.

## THE ONGOINGS OF HISTORY

“Contrast the beginning and end of the last century. Use the elaborate and reliable tables prepared by Dr. Dennis. What do they declare? On the one hand perhaps six or eight missionary societies; on the other, more than five hundred, half of them immediately working in the foreign fields, and the other auxilliary to them. On the one hand, perhaps one hundred ordained ministers laboring in the foreign lands; on the other, six thousand ordained missionaries in those fields, assisted by perhaps twice that number of unordained missionaries, physicians, teachers, printers, helpers of all sorts. On the one hand, a Church so small as scarcely to be counted; on the other, a Church in heathen lands of one and a half million communicants, with a Christian population of three times that number. On the one hand, no native helper of whom we know aught; on the other, seventy thousand native helpers, of whom four thousand are ordained ministers. . . . Yet more prophetic are the native schools with more than a million pupils, one-third of them in advanced studies, preparing for wide influence in society and the Church. Consider also the one hundred and sixty mission presses, issuing a vast volume of Christian literature in many tongues. The century began with perhaps forty versions of the Bible open for one-fiftieth of the race; it closed with four hundred and fifty — a gift of pentecostal tongues to four-fifths of the race.”

Had he lived to see the present day, it would be interesting indeed to note what contrast and hopeful

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

observations the bishop might have made concerning the first twenty years of the present century, particularly concerning the Centenary movement in his own church, which single-handed, raised \$105,000,-000 for home and foreign missions, to be paid in a period of five years.

In the quadrennium 1912-16 the total receipts of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension from all sources were \$4,495,826. In 1919-20 the receipts were \$6,612,593, and in 1920-21 the receipts will be \$5,347,842. This is, for a single year, \$552,-016 more than for the whole quadrennium previously, and last year was \$1,116,667 more than for the total quadrennium preceding.

For the Foreign Board the total receipts from all sources for the entire four years of the 1912-16 quadrennium were \$6,311,261, and for the last year were \$6,612,593, so that last year's receipts were \$300,000 more in a single year than were received in the whole quadrennium preceding.<sup>1</sup>

Look at the magnificent result for the year:

Centenary .....	\$14,290,792
The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society .....	2,267,767
The Woman's Home Missionary So- ciety .....	2,828,797
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$19,387,356

<sup>1</sup> Figures taken from an address by Bishop Thomas Nicholson, at the Detroit Conference—1921.

## THE ONGOINGS OF HISTORY

This sum given by the Methodist Episcopal Church is greater than that given by all the churches in 1900.

As an index to many modern movements, take the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of this church, founded in 1869. In fifty years this society had raised \$20,000,000, gained a membership of 400,000, and had sent 600 missionaries to the field. Preparatory to celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, it set up, 1914, a number of goals to be reached by 1919. The goals were:

Magazines .....	180,000
Money .....	\$1,600,000
Missionaries .....	1,000
Members .....	400,000

Before the five years expired, the money goal was increased to \$2,000,000. Their Jubilee report for 1919, was

Magazines, 212,333, gain in five years of 41%.

Money, \$2,006,370, a gain in five years of over 100%.

Missionaries, 1087.

Members, 459,498, a gain of 44%.

The report for 1921, including tuitions, was \$2,686,301, and the membership had increased to 613,768, making this the largest woman's organization in the world.

The Women's Home Missionary Society has a membership of 428,169 and raised last year \$2,716,453. Its work is largely that of Christianizing and Americanizing the foreign element in this country. It claims to be the largest Americanization organization in our country.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

Here are two women's organizations in a single denomination with a membership aggregating over a million and with an annual income of about five and one-half million dollars devoted entirely to altruistic and missionary work. No other age in the history of the Christian church can make such a showing. This is the day of Christianity's very greatest conquests, both in the home and foreign field, and these conquests very largely constitute the ongoings of history.

BY-PRODUCTS OF THE CHURCH

“The race has now crossed the Great Divide of human history, and numberless streams of tendency are all unconsciously moving toward the oneness of the great future.”

*Josiah Strong.*



## CHAPTER XIII

### BY-PRODUCTS OF THE CHURCH

MUCH of the very best fruits of the church is to be found in its by-products. The Christian Church itself is not only growing by leaps and bounds, but at the same time it is inspiring many allied religious activities which in the aggregate may nearly equal the influence of the church proper.

Not long since the writer overheard a "doleful saint" deploring the low condition of religion in a certain city of about 8,000 population. We replied off-hand, that "there was twice as much religion in the town as six years ago." Asked to explain, we were able to say: "Of the twelve churches, every one is as strong and some of them very much stronger than they were a half dozen years ago. Besides, during that time, we have built at a cost of \$80,000, a modern Young Men's Christian Association, which has supplemented the work of the churches by its Bible classes and numerous religious activities. We have built a fine new hospital at a cost of \$150,000, and are treating nearly 1,000 cases a year—one-fifth of this work is extended free to those unable to pay. We have thoroughly organized our charities and keep the treasury so well supplied that no family is in want in the city. We are maintaining a trained county nurse, a trained school nurse, a county

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

physician on salary, so that the poor are receiving adequate medical care and treatment, and we have voted out the saloon by a majority of 2,000, and are succeeding in keeping it out. Your old time religion of ten years ago was content to confine itself largely to comfortable churches and to take little interest in these modern activities.”

We freely admit, of course, that our modern Christian activities were largely born of that earlier faith and zeal, but the modern church, while by no means exhausted in faith and spirit, is giving itself in service in a measure never before known in the history of Christianity. Take the matter of Christian charity within the church:—“Of the charity workers of the country, 92 per cent are church members.”<sup>1</sup>

What a wonderful stream of healing and blessing it has been! “Washing away so many tears, softening so much suffering, saving so many young lives from misery and sin, ministering to so many deathbeds, making the solitary evening of life sweet to so many forsaken ones, and the morning glad to so many who would have been born to sorrow and shame; which in so many countries has cared for the sick, the blind, the deaf, the crippled, the outcast and tempted, the young, the orphan, the foundling, and the aged. Surely, if anything is a foregleam of that kingdom of heaven which is yet to shine on earth, it is the brotherhood of spirit shown in the

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur J. Brown, Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, in an address which appeared in the *Christian Pacific Advocate*, Sept. 26, 1918.

## BY-PRODUCTS OF THE CHURCH

charity of the modern world.'"<sup>1</sup> This is most distinctly a fruit of Christ's teaching.

The Year Book of the Churches for 1921-1922 lists some 250 undenominational and interdenominational agencies organized to serve on lines in accord with the spirit and purpose of Christ. And this list is by no means complete. We shall name but a few. These movements are virtually all modern. They belong to the "New Time Religion."

The Young Men's Christian Association is a modern institution.<sup>2</sup> In North America alone there are 2,120 Associations, with a membership of just about one million, of which 220,000 are boys. The property valuation amounts to \$150,000,000, with an annual operating expenditure of \$50,000,000. These figures do not include money spent for war work. How varied are the activities of this institution, the following items will indicate: 70,000 socials and entertainments, 85,000 positions found through the employment section, 345,000 different men and boys registered in gymnasium classes, 122,000 different men and boys enrolled in educational courses, 118,000 in regular courses of Bible Study, 36,000 decisions for Christ, and 11,000 united with churches. Friends of this institution gave \$167,000,000 for war work and \$158,000,000 was actually spent on the field in helpful service.<sup>3</sup>

The Young Women's Christian Association is still more modern and can boast of a marvelous record in

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<sup>1</sup> C. L. Brace "Gesta Christi" p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> First Organized in America 1851, in England 1844.

<sup>3</sup> The World Almanac.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

Christian service. In the United States it has about 1,100 associations, a membership of 560,000, with property value of \$20,500,000. Its budget for 1921 was over \$19,000,000.

The Salvation Army is quite a modern movement.<sup>2</sup> But already its drum-beat is heard in every city of any importance around the world. For the year ending December, 1920, this modern religious movement reports the following international statistics: Countries occupied, 70; languages in which it is preaching the Gospel, 42; number of corps, 11,000; social institutions, 1,276; day schools, 751; naval and military homes, 41; periodicals issued, 82. Its activities for a single year are nothing short of marvelous. Speaking only for the United States, notice this record for the year ending 1920: Employment found for 52,000 men and 13,000 women; 260,000 pounds of ice and 3,000,000 pounds of coal distributed; 290,000 Christmas dinners furnished and toys given to 125,000 children, 1,555,000 beds and 495,000 meals supplied.<sup>3</sup> But figures become too tedious in an effort to relate what this institution is doing, which serves where service is most needed.

Hospital work by Protestant churches is a modern enterprise. One hundred years ago there was not a hospital or trained physician in the non-Christian world. Now there are hundreds of hospitals and dis-

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<sup>2</sup> The movement started in 1865. It took the name "Salvation Army" 1878.

## BY-PRODUCTS OF THE CHURCH

pensaries treating literally millions of cases.<sup>1</sup> The Methodist Church entered upon hospital work in 1887. It now has over fifty hospitals in the United States worth \$10,000,000 with endowments of nearly \$5,000,000, and is treating 100,000 patients a year, a large amount of which work is free.

The Deaconess movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church, so closely associated with hospital work, has sprung up within the past generation. Already its property value in the United States is \$12,767,000. In Europe, it is \$1,500,000. In the United States there are 881 Deaconesses, 142 probationers, and 503 associate workers. The total number in the United States is 1,526, and in Europe, 907. Note the activities of this young organization for the year 1921: Families visited, 362,524; sick people visited, 62,434; bewildered travelers assisted in railroad stations, 6,844; patients treated in Deaconess hospitals, 38,538; volume of free work to needy people in these hospitals, \$206,144; students in training for nurses, 579; children taken to summer camps, 11,583; children taught by deaconess industrial schools, 167,128; boys and girls being taught in deaconess training schools, 556.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union is a modern movement, founded in 1874, but it has been extraordinarily fruitful in good works and has become one of the largest women's organizations in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> I have seen the statement that there are over 700 hospitals and dispensaries in the foreign field which treat annually 10,000,000 cases, but I have been unable up to date to verify these figures. Indeed so new is protestant hospital work that it is extremely difficult to get information.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

Its work has been carried on under six general departments: organization, preventive, educational, evangelistic, legal and social. How very varied are the activities of each of these departments will be seen by analyzing but two. Take for examples the departments of organization and education. Under organization, we note such sub-heads as: Lecturers and evangelists, Young Women's branch, Loyal Temperance Legion branch; work among Foreign speaking people; work among the colored; work among the Indians. Under the department of education are to be found such sub-heads as: Scientific Temperance Instruction; Physical Education; Temperance Literature; Presenting Our Cause to Influential Bodies; Temperance and Labor; the Press; Anti-Narcotics; School Savings Banks; Kindergarten; Medal Contests, and so forth for each of the six departments. Through the influence of this organization, every state in the Union has enacted legislation providing for the teaching of physiology and hygiene in the public schools, with special reference to the effect of alcohol and narcotics. Laws raising the age of consent have been passed in most of the States also as a result of the influence of this organization. It aided greatly in the passage of the anti-canteen law, also in securing the law prohibiting the sale of liquor and fire-arms to the native races in the Pacific Islands. It has preached the gospel of social purity and the single standard of morals in practically every city of importance the world around. This organization was teaching intelligent patriotism and Americanism by

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placing our Flag in schools, libraries, public halls, and by many other means, a generation before the outbreak of the Great War, and who knows, with our polyglot population, and hyphenated citizenship whether or not our patriotism, without this teaching, would have stood the test of that Great War. It was very influential, if not the chief factor, in securing the eighteenth amendment providing for national prohibition.

An international branch has been formed under the title "World's Women's Christian Temperance Union" and it has extended into over fifty nations of the world. The "Round the World Missionaries"—able speakers and organizers, have literally carried their gospel to the ends of the earth. Perhaps the most conspicuous piece of work by the world's branch was the polyglot petition for Home Protection, addressed to the governments of the world. The petition was written by Miss Willard. It was circulated throughout the world and the signatures came in fifty languages. The petition bore 1,121,200 names, including 350,000 from Great Britain. It was presented to our government through President Cleveland, February 19, 1897. All this is a new and wholesome force in our modern Christianity. It is worthy of remark that the two largest women's organizations in the world are both Christian organizations—the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

The Daily Vacation Bible School is a movement that has sprung up within this century. In 1901, there

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

were but four of these schools being operated in mission churches in New York City. The movement rapidly spread to other cities. This summer—1922—greater New York is operating 250 schools and Chicago has opened over 200 with an anticipated enrollment of over 30,000 boys and girls. The country at large will have over 4,000 such schools. The movement has already extended to the Orient, and Peking has 42 schools. The attendance is voluntary and the program varied—including marches, drills, Bible stories, music, character stories, memory work and many kinds of hand craft activities. The term is five or six weeks—two hours a day. This work is popular with both parents and children.

The Student Volunteer Movement is modern. It was started in 1886. Since which time over 7,000 student volunteers recruited by this agency have been accepted by the various missionary boards and sent to the foreign field.

But what more need we say, for time would fail us to trace the work and influence of such modern Christian activities as the Gideon Movement, Pocket Testament League, Red Cross, Life Service Commissions; Orphanages, American Mission to Lepers, Christian Unity Foundation, Religious Education Association, American Sunday School Union, Commission on Inter-Racial Cooperation, American Tract Society, American Bible Society, Commission on Evangelism and Life Service, National Testament and Tract League, Family Altar League, Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching, Rocke-



## BY-PRODUCTS OF THE CHURCH

feller Foundation, American National Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Big Sister Movement, American Peace Society, World's Purity Federation, Anti-Saloon League, Society for the Friendless, Playground and Recreational Association of America, National Child Welfare Association, National Association of Travelers Aid Society, World Peace Foundation, American Prison Association, Institute for Crippled and Disabled Men, International Reform Bureau, National Child Welfare Association, National Health Council, National Council of Social Workers, Florence Crittenton Missions, Flying Squadron Foundation, etc., etc. There are some 250 to 300 of these helpful institutions springing out of the life of the church proper, and they are nearly all of a modern origin.



## UNORGANIZED RELIGION

“The outer history of Christendom is not the whole history of Christendom. We must remember that through the ages, leaving profound consequences, but leaving no conspicuous records upon the historian’s page, countless men and women were touched by that spirit of Jesus which still lived and lives still at the core of Christianity, that they led lives that were on the whole gracious and helpful and that they did unselfish and devoted deeds. Through the ages, such lives cleared the air and made a better world possible.”

*H. G. Wells, The Outline of History,*  
(p. 628).

## CHAPTER XIV

### UNORGANIZED RELIGION

ONE CAN NOT define nor evaluate Christianity by quoting statistics. It is more than statistics. It is more than an institution. It is therefore quite impossible for one to indicate its progress by recounting the history of the church as an institution, or by tabulating the names and work of the institutions closely allied to it. Like the Nile, the church has everywhere overflowed its banks, leaving a rich deposit, out of which spring growths of many forms to grace and bless the earth. Perhaps it is better to change the figure and think of the institutional phase of Christianity as the body, whose life giving and preserving spirit is, like a radiant personality, exerting an influence way beyond the limits of the visible form itself—in love, charity, sympathy, and in kindly deeds performed by one hand while the other is unconscious of what is going on or of the source that inspired it.

There are Christian activities everywhere outside the church as well as in and by the church. There are manifold signs that tastes have been refined and conduct greatly modified by the leavening power of the teaching of Jesus in multitudes of men whose names have never been enrolled in a church.

Almost 14,000,000 people sent requests to the Con-

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ference on Limitations of Armament in an effort to inspire that Conference to the achievement of the largest possible results. It is interesting to pick up a handful of papers and glance over them to note the kindly things, good deeds and real Christian services that are constantly being rendered.

I picked up at random some papers and magazines of different dates that happened to lie near my desk, and with fifty or more other items, I marked the following:

"The subway train was crowded. I luckily secured a seat through the courtesy of a working-man. He stood in front of me, continuing to read his paper. He did not look any more tired than the usual run of toilers of the soil. Two gentlemen stood alongside him. The seat in front of the second man was vacated at Seventy-second street. Both these men at the same time beckoned to the working man to take the unoccupied seat, which he did without hesitancy and with a grateful "Thank you." Strange occurrence, wasn't it? It is mighty good to think that in the subway there travel men with feeling for their fellow-creatures, and I have always thought that it was an unknown quantity."<sup>1</sup>

As history goes, it was not so long ago that these two well dressed men would have enslaved that workman. I recently stood on the cobble-paved streets of the ruins of Pompeii—and noted the ruts worn by wheels of vehicles deep into these hard

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<sup>1</sup> A story by a lady, told by "The Outlook," originally printed by the "New York Sun," I think.

## UNORGANIZED RELIGION

stones, also the large boulders at the crossings where sharp turns must necessarily be made, and remarked: "This does not seem adapted to horses. How could they make these turns?" I was informed that those ruts were worn by vehicles drawn by the hands of slaves.

Again: "Mr. L. O. Jones of the White Cross Movement has just returned from Pike County, Kentucky, the largest county in the State, situated in the foothills of the Cumberlands. There are 53,000 people in Pike County, with no hospital facilities. Time after time patients have had to be taken 103 miles, with great expense and not infrequent fatality. Some time ago, a private corporation started a hospital and after expending many thousands were compelled to give it up. The church steps in, through the energy of its pastor, and the completion of the hospital is assured. The coal miners of the community have assumed \$50,000; the county has assumed \$25,000, and Pikeville has assumed another \$25,000, making \$100,000 altogether. When the hospital is completed it will have a capacity of fifty-three beds."<sup>1</sup>

Again: A certain editor, speaking before a Ministerial Association in Chicago, said: "You can not call up one half the homes in Chicago after eight o'clock and find anybody at home. They have all gone to the theater." One of the Chicago papers took up that speech, and the next night at 9:25 a reporter, having selected twenty names from the

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<sup>1</sup> North Western Christian Advocate.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

telephone book at random, called the numbers. In an hour, he found eighteen families at home and two away. The incident has value of several sorts, but the aspect of it which needs to be considered just now is that the home-keeping folk, who are the backbone of the Nation's everyday life, are far and away in the majority.'"<sup>1</sup>

Again: Another reported that a group of students from fourteen states and thirty-five colleges have organized "The Student Fellowship for Christian Life Service, to emphasize the sense of fellowship among students who wish to share in the common purpose of making America Christian for our own sake and the sake of the World."

Again: "The Rotary Clubs all over North America, numbering 85,000 live-wire business men are engaged in a Nation-wide campaign to give every crippled boy and girl in this Country a new chance. It is estimated that over 300,000 crippled children will be helped this way without cost to the child. In order to carry this forward, the Rotarians have formed the International Society for Crippled Children. . . . Arrangement are being made to open a permanent international headquarters in either Chicago or New York.'"<sup>2</sup>

Again: "American delegates who attended the meeting of the International Committee of the World Alliance for International Friendship, held from August 5-11, were favorably impressed by the

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<sup>1</sup> The Northwestern Christian Advocate.

<sup>2</sup> From "The Epworth Herald."



## UNORGANIZED RELIGION

friendly spirit that prevailed throughout the conferences of representatives from twenty-five different countries. Germans, Austrians, French and English discussed the problems of world peace and disarmament without a trace of the rancor in evidence at the international gatherings held at Genoa and The Hague. Nearly two hundred delegates were present.

“The benevolent work of fraternal orders is much better advertised than is that of the Protestant churches . . . The Protestant churches are supporting more children, however, than all the fraternal orders, twenty thousand being maintained in this way.”<sup>1</sup>

“Another gave an account of Mr. Ford’s \$5,000,000 hospital. It should be remembered that all state or publicly supported Charities have grown out of a religious feeling and never was there a time when the public took better care of the deaf, dumb and blind, maimed, feeble-minded, and orphans. Indeed, some maintain that we, under our Christian civilization, are pushing philanthropy so far as to endanger our modern civilization.”<sup>2</sup>

After what war in all history was such effort put forth to take care of the injured soldier? The Federal Board of Vocational Education was created by Act of Congress, 1917, making possible appropriations to be used in the promotion of vocational education. For the year 1918-19, \$1,860,000 was appropriated, but the appropriation increases each

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<sup>1</sup> The Christian Century.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Stoddard’s *Revolt Against Civilization*.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

year until in 1925-26, it reaches \$7,367,000, which amount is to be provided annually thereafter. By the passage of the Federal Vocational rehabilitation act, 1918, and an amendment thereto, 1919, the board was charged with the duty of furnishing vocational rehabilitation to every member of the military or naval forces of the United States discharged with a disability incurred, increased or aggravated while a member of such forces or traceable to such service. The board carried out this work until the passage of the bill, 1921, creating the Veterans' Bureau, which consolidated all the agencies dealing with the disabled soldiers, sailors and marines.

Wickedness is noisy; it gets itself recognized as news. Goodness is quiet and orderly, but it so largely predominates that it is regarded as the regular, normal ongoing of modern life. The mother devotedly caring for the home, the father industriously providing food, clothing and shelter for the family, the trusted business man unostentatiously serving his community through honest and efficient business methods; the professional man, — the lawyer, doctor, teacher, content to serve—"dreading praise not blame;" the laborer industriously providing the raw material and shaping it into use; the unbroken friendships, the helpful deeds, kind words and the innumerable courtesies and pleasantries that keep life moving smoothly and joyously—who thinks of giving these substantial virtues headlines in a newspaper? Why? Because it is taken for granted. This is the usual way of living. It is the unusual, the exceptional that becomes news.

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We talk about the Great War, but the really great wars and the significant victories, are the wars against, and victories over, epidemics, typhoid, hookworm, rheumatism, small-pox, diphtheria, yellow fever, infant mortality, and they are nearly all inspired by a kindlier attitude toward humanity, born of the Christian Spirit. Already victories in these wars have extended the average length of life some five or six years, and removed untold suffering from the human family. "In Havana the death rate after American occupation fell from fifty to twenty. The yellow fever in the United States has practically disappeared. Small-pox, typhoid and diphtheria are practically mastered. At present, in Massachusetts, life is lengthening about fourteen years per century; in Europe about seventeen; in India, where medical progress is practically unknown, it remains stationary."<sup>1</sup>

It is a privilege to have lived in an age that has witnessed in our country the passing of human slavery, an institution that has trailed more human woe and misery in its wake than any other evil known to history; of the American saloon, next to slavery, humanity's greatest curse; the public lottery; the enfranchisement of women not only in our country but in at least twenty-five nations and provinces of the Christian world; and the marching of 30,000,000 brave men into battle, 6,000,000 giving their lives to prove that right, not might, shall rule in the affairs of men; the formation of the League of

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Edward Lock "Daybreak Everywhere" p. 88.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

Nations, with its International Court of Justice; the rapid growth of international law; and the meeting and work of the Conference on Limitation of Armament. For one to have witnessed all this, well might he, like Simeon of old say, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

But the Christian religion is more than a destructive force. It does more than overthrow evil. The glory of Christianity is its constructive work. However important the forgiveness of sin may be, and it is very important, this was not, nor is not Christ's chief work. Christ was a carpenter. His chief work was that of the builder—builder of men, builder of greater institutions, the builder of new and higher civilization, the builder of a better and happier humanity. Christ is the Master Builder of the ages, and the evidences of this constructive influence of Christianity, as has been shown in other parts of this volume, was never so accumulative as today.

The church by no means embodies all the Christianity in the world. There are literally thousands of persons who really act according to the Biblical revelation, its standards and ideals, who never technically unite with a church. "In every age were simple men and women, not known perhaps to history, or even to those of their own time, whose souls and lives were filled with the principles of this new faith. These gradually affected social habits and practices; sometimes changing them before they in-

## UNORGANIZED RELIGION

fluenced legislation, sometimes, by a favoring public accident, being able first to reform laws and public officials; thus day by day, by imperceptible steps purifying church, states and people; gradually causing certain great abuses and wrongs to melt away before the fervency of their spirit, and the innocence and beneficence of their lives. Though for the most part unknown perhaps to ecclesiastical records, or the historian of empires, they have illustrated and transmitted the divine truths which they received from Him. In lives of purity and human brotherhood, in honesty, faithfulness, compassion and true humanity, they have sought to follow their Great Leader. While living for Him, they have lived for the human race. Their spirit and their sacrifice have made it possible that ages hence some of the great evils of mankind should come to an end, that some tears should forever be wiped away, and a fair prospect be held forth of a distant future of humanity, justice and righteousness.”<sup>1</sup>

It is this overflow, this unseen current, this in-working leaven, this fine spirit of helpfulness, this unorganized Christianity, that so many fail to recognize when they complain of the modern influence of the Christian religion, and the work of the Christian Church. Criticism is usually made against the institutional phase of Christianity, but one wonders how long this rich overflow would continue without the institutional church—that provides ministers, schools, colleges, a Christian literature, book concerns for

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<sup>1</sup> “Gesta Christi” by C. L. Brace, p. 3.

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the distribution of good literature, church papers for young and old, and the preaching of the Gospel of Christ to millions who are influenced but never enroll as Church members. The spirit would not live long without the body. It would be difficult, yea, impossible, to maintain the Christian virtues without some agency, some organization to advocate and propagate them. It is a mistake of course, to make organization an end in itself as was the tendency of the Christian Church in certain periods of its history, but it is a far greater mistake to suppose that the religious life could be maintained without organization. However imperfectly the Christian Church has performed its task, it is conceded to be the most remarkable institution known to man. "Here is an institution devoted avowedly to social idealism, to the remaking of human character and of human institutions themselves in conformity with the divine ideal. Whatever the faults of the church, surely no other human institution bears such witnesses, to the idealistic aspirations of mankind. It is not accident, therefore that many of the noblest, most aspiring, most unselfish spirits of our race have found their work in building up this institution."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Ellwood, *the Reconstruction of Religion*, p. 285.

## BIBLICAL LEARNING

“Freedom is recreated year by year  
In hearts wide open on the Godward side,  
In souls calm-cadenced as the whirling sphere,  
In minds that sway the future like a tide;  
No broadest creeds can hold her, and no codes;  
She chooses men for her august abodes,  
Building them fair and fronting to the dawn.”

Lowell.

The aim of real science, as well as true religion, is to know the truth confident that even unwelcome truth is better than cherished error, that the welfare of the human race depends upon the extension and diffusion of knowledge among men, and that the truth alone can make us free.

Conklin, — *The Direction of Human Evolution.*

Thus it appears that Biblical Criticism is simply one of the sisterhood of modern science; and surely when we understand her true mission, we shall feel that her presence is benign and shall rejoice to do her grateful and loving homage.

Willard Chamberlain Selleck,  
“*New Appreciation of the Bible.*”



## CHAPTER XV

### BIBLICAL LEARNING

IT IS not assumed that all readers will agree with the positions set forth in this and in the following chapters. Our only effort in this chapter will be to call attention to certain changes and tendencies in our attitude toward the Bible which seem to indicate hope for the future. Neither is there in this discussion any disposition to find fault with the conservative element in the church of today. We are making no defense of radicalism, no plea for a new Bible or a new religion. There has always been in the church both a conservative and progressive element. This is as it should be. Often there are also two extreme wings—radical reactionaries and radical liberals. One hope of the future lies in the fact that neither of these radical wings has won. The church is not safe without a wise, substantial, deeply spiritual, conservative element. This element has always proved a check against extreme liberalism on the one hand and cold rationalism on the other. It is only reactionary conservatism, that form that blocks the wheels of religious progress, against which we would care to lift a word of warning. Conservatism too often permits an over development of the defects of its own virtues—a mere clinging to the existing order of things with no effort to discriminate between the

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worth-while and the outworn; an aversion to change simply because it is change. It thus becomes a clog on the wheels of legitimate progress and prevents needed reforms and unconsciously perpetuates real evils. This phase of conservatism is pure bourbonism and accounts for much of the lack of progress, where we would naturally expect the church to go forward with an ever accelerated movement. To combat positive evil is not the only task of the church, but it is often put under the necessity of carrying a dead weight of well meaning but mistaken conservatism.

In reality it is the ultra conservatives who are our most confirmed and shall we say, our most dangerous skeptics, and they are none the less dangerous because their doubt is unconscious or at least unacknowledged. "To refuse to submit religious institutions and convictions to the pitiless scrutiny and exacting estimate which everything else in the modern world is undergoing, appears to arise from fears as to the results of such a trial a lurking doubt as to whether the church could meet the test that all other institutions are facing. Such an attitude, far from revealing loyalty and faith, indicates the timidity and distrust which can maintain its convictions only by throwing about them an artificial protection. It is the unconscious skeptics who claim the special privileges of pious acquiescence for their beliefs; they must keep them unchallenged, wrapped in layers of devout obscurantism and vague sentiment, lest, if the outward sign of the spiritual life be altered, the inward grace itself should perish from the earth.

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“Institutional religion is shot through and through with this subtle and corrosive skepticism which masquerades under the name of faith and orthodoxy. If the Church perishes, it will be this type of ‘faith’, the sort of sinner who holds it, that will be chiefly responsible.”<sup>1</sup> The church is rapidly breaking from this over caution, this artificial protection of the Bible. Reverent, though rigid criticism, has the right of way. It is not the results of modern Biblical criticism we wish to consider here, but its spirit — certain new tendencies, emphases and methods.

Says McFadyen, “It can not be too strongly emphasized that criticism does not stand for a definite set of results. It stands for a method, an attitude, a temper which patiently collects and impartially examines all available facts and allows them to make their own impression upon the mind of the investigator. Perhaps the danger of the present time is not that of a critical study of our Bible, so much as that of standing still, not that of the progressive who quickens a new interest in the Bible, as that of the ultra-conservative who perhaps silences a scientific study of the Bible. Biblical Criticism is simply a free and reverent study of all Biblical facts.”<sup>1</sup> This freedom in the realm of Biblical research was not so cheerfully granted a generation ago, but we have come to see that Christianity could not long continue to advance, encumbered with a dogmatic insistence upon old and outworn Biblical interpretations for no higher reason than that they are old; or with a

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<sup>1</sup> Fitch—“Can the Church Survive the Changing Order”—p. 77.  
See “Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church” pages

25, 30, 47.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

tenacious clinging to traditional views, merely because they are traditional. Neither could it long continue to progress under a mistrust of scholarship and with its eyes closed to the flood of new light that has been pouring in upon us from every source during these modern times. This attitude was one of the real dangers in the past, a danger that is now happily disappearing.

It is readily granted that there were forms of Biblical criticism in Germany and elsewhere that gave the Church real concern. Its influence was destructive, and no doubt it was designed to be. It was right that the church should combat such influences. There are many reasons why this criticism as developed in Germany during the nineteenth century could not be regarded as the final conclusion of scholarship.<sup>1</sup> It was wanting in the constructive element; its importance was so exaggerated that it developed into a form of scholasticism; much of it was irrelevant to the real issues at stake. Many of the sciences upon which the conclusions of these critics were based were not then sufficiently developed to render the work of synthetic scholarship of that age trustworthy. Modern scholars are now going over the work of the nineteenth century in a more reverent and thorough manner, and with far better tools to work with. "The desideratum for just thinking and conviction is that we should have both the steadfast and open mind. 'Prove (or try) all things'—that is the open mind. 'Hold fast that which is good'—that is the steadfast mind."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Sanday, "Inspiration" pp. 117 to 119, also Ellwood, "The Reconstruction of Religion" p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. R. C. Gillie. Constructive Christianity.

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“We define criticism” says Henry S. Nash “as that mental process in modern Christianity whereby the historic character, the true nature of divine revelation is appreciated and manifested. The historic spirit, the desire to know the whole past even as it was in itself, comes in as a noble servant raised up by God to help the church to truly know her Bible, and thus pay her debt to the Author of the Sacred Page. Christianity stands or falls with the Bible. For we believe our Scriptures to be the book of witness to the true quality of the ultimate religious experience, and to the character and being of God as revealed through that experience, the authentic record of the blessed promise and the saving presence of the perfect life on earth. The well-being of the church depends upon the right interpretation of the Bible. We must seek to know it from within and along the lines of its own meaning and purpose, that this is our most sacred obligation.”<sup>2</sup> Honest, conscientious, scientific and historic criticism of this sort has won the day. The helpfulness of its work is conceded. It has already rendered a real service to Christianity, and given us a considerable body of results that will no doubt prove of permanent value.

This new method and spirit, also much of its results, have been accepted during the last thirty or forty years by practically every author of note in all Protestant bodies. During this period there has been produced scarcely a single accredited commentary, Biblical dictionary, or religious text book which does not assume

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<sup>1</sup> “The History of the Higher Criticism of the New Testament—  
p. 14-15.

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this newer attitude.<sup>1</sup> Writers like the late Washington Gladden, Lyman Abbot, the late Borden P. Bowne, the late John Fiske, Charles E. Jefferson, Charles Foster Kent, and literally scores of others who were in sympathy with movement embodied its best spirit in popular religious magazines and books until at present large numbers in the Christian Church are more or less familiar with it. It now finds expression in our Sunday School helps and literature designed for the use of young people, in our denominational papers prepared for family reading, and in much if not most of our best modern preaching. In short what is called the New Biblical Learning is now quite well understood by many in our pews. Understanding it, they no longer dread or fear it. Whatever danger seemed to accompany this movement in the early stages, whatever crisis it seemed to create, has now virtually passed. Its better method, its open-mindedness, its kindly, progressive and reverent temper, its emphasis upon the spirit rather than upon the letter promise better things for the near future.

There are still those, of course, who would advocate the old order. But their voice is not dominant. Most church people now realize that it was not the Bible that was endangered, but simply certain concepts about the Bible. It is very easy for devout, well meaning people to fall into the delusion — and the love for and devotion to the Bible often strengthen this

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<sup>1</sup> "It is impossible to resist the impresson that the critical argument is in the stronger hands, and that it is accompanied by a far greater command of the materials. The cause of criticism is, it is difficult to doubt, the winning cause." Sanday—"Inspiration" p. 116.

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delusion — of substituting traditional views about the Bible for the Bible itself. Anything, therefore, contrary to their interpretation even though that interpretation rested chiefly on tradition, or even though they were unaware of what it did rest upon, seems to them to overthrow the Book itself.

Our conceptions, our theories, our systems in regard to truth and reality — if human knowledge is advancing — necessarily change. But reality is permanent. The science of biology — of life — is new, but life is old. Geology, the science about the earth, changes, but the earth with its rocks and mountains is permanent. Our theories about light — the adaptations and uses of it — change with advancing ages, but the sun continues to shine with an unbroken light. Our theories and interpretations of the Bible change, but the Bible itself — its spirit, truth, and influence — these remain the permanent possession of mankind and no artificial support will increase their value.

We have come to see with Fairbairn that "Criticism is but a name for scientific scholarship scientifically used. Grant such scholarship legitimate, and the legitimacy of its use to all fit subjects must also be granted. Nobody denies, nobody even doubts, the legitimacy of its application to classical and ethical literature, the necessity or excellency of the work it has done, or where the material allowed it, the accuracy of the work achieved — now the Scriptures either are or are not fit subjects for scholarship. If they are not, then all sacred scholarship has been and still is a mistake, and they are in a body of literature pos-

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sessed of the inglorious distinction of being incapable of being understood." Our newer and better attitude does not break with scholarship. It only asks that scholarship shall be reverent, sufficiently in sympathy with and appreciative of the purpose of this Book of Books to enable it to reach fair and unbiased conclusion. Irreverent scholarship can not understand the Bible much less give an unbiased interpretation of it. The Bible must be spiritually, as well as intellectually, discerned.

"The new Biblical learning has simply committed itself, reverently and fearlessly, to the guidance of the spirit in the use of the instruments of modern scholarship in its search for truth. It prefers the religion of the spirit to the religion of authority. It maintains the liberty of the spirit as against the bondage of the letter. It follows the spirit of truth even to the defiance of tradition. . . . It claims for the twentieth century the freedom of the Reformation, and it prophesies for the twentieth century the illumination of a new Pentecost. Its emphasis upon the essential elements of the faith is far more commanding than the former hangings of the whole faith upon things indifferent. So implicit faith in truth and the incessant search for truth are far more promising than any passive contentment with possible error. Its absolute surrender to the spirit's guidance will mean more rapid progress in Biblical knowledge in the coming century than even the last century has seen."<sup>1</sup> This sort of criticism has not only immensely enriched the

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<sup>1</sup> Doremus Almy Hayes. "The New Age and its Creed."—p. 37.



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Bible, it has given the church a new confidence in the Bible. She has come to see that it can stand criticism; that the Bible does not so much need defending, as it needs to be given a chance; that it simply needs to be approached in a frank, open, reverent state of mind, and that the message it speaks to such minds needs to be followed, needs to be fearlessly lived.

Modern Biblical learning has not only emancipated us ~~as~~ from the bondage of the letter and committed us to the guidance of the spirit — it has set forth in bold relief the one great figure — the life and personality of Christ. It regards scriptural passages important largely in the measure that they relate to Him and reveal Him. The Bible is a portrait — Biblical learning is causing the face of Christ to shine brighter and brighter with each passing age — tender, pure, divine, appealing and inspiring. It is enabling us more and more to see the world's Savior face to face. It is not a call "Back to Christ," but it is leading us onward and upward to a more thorough appreciation of Him, his spirit, his teaching, his method of working with and of saving men.

This emancipation from the bondage of the letter, this reliance upon the spirit, this larger freedom of personal judgment, this forward instead of the backward look, this reverent openmindedness, this larger emphasis upon the teaching, the life, the personality of Christ — all point in the right direction. A door has been opened to freedom and investigation of thought. A friendship with reverent scholarship has been formed that promises to be lasting, and unembarrassed progress is the promise of the future.



# MODERN THEOLOGY

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new  
And God fulfills himself in many ways."

"Let knowledge grow from more to more  
But more of reverence in us dwell;  
That mind and soul according well,  
May make one music as before  
But vaster."

"The present day theology, then, is simply the explanation which men are giving of religious truth in the light of this century. Increasing knowledge of the world, and of ourselves and of the Bible call for new explanation of the facts of religion. New light is always breaking forth; we see these great themes in the new light and discover that our former theories of them need to be reshaped. This has been true in all the ages of the world, and it will always be true. God is always making all things new in the order of nature, and therefore, in the world of theory, old things are passing away and all things are becoming new."

— *Washington Gladden,*  
*Present Day Theology, p. 8.*

## CHAPTER XVI

### MODERN THEOLOGY

**N**O EFFORT will here be made to pass critical judgment on modern theology. We desire only to call attention to a certain freedom and trend in present day religious thought, and certain changes, and new emphases in regard to religious life and character that to us seem to indicate hope for the future.

Just as it was necessary to liberate Biblical study from the bondage of the letter, it was necessary that theology should be emancipated from the bondage of dogmatism, superstition, and bigotry; that, if reverent, theologians should be free to think and to declare their conclusions. Christianity could not go forward with a non-progressive, moribund theology.

Here again it is not so much the body of formulated results, but the spirit, method, and emphasis that are fraught with promise. In regard to the newer theology, little more than the critical work has been done. Old systems have been opened and critically reviewed and at least a door has been left open for the admittance of new light. Constructive work has not advanced far. A better method has been adopted, some material gathered, and the work on the new volume has started in the right spirit. Little more than the introduction, however, has been written. A general

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survey of the field to be covered has been made and certain chapters suggested. Furthermore, the work can now proceed with far less annoyance and opposition than would have beset such an undertaking a generation ago. It is not designed that this new volume shall ever be completed, thus leaving it possible to add new chapters from age to age as the race advances in the knowledge of truth.

The new theology up to date, therefore, is but "A movement, not a system; an atmosphere, not a creed; a method, not an attainment; an emphasis, not a dogma; a tendency or rather a group of tendencies; a phenomenon, or rather a series of phenomena; it is a spirit, an accent, an intonation, a view point, a vision, and not any thing that can be measured or statistically defined."<sup>1</sup> Yet it is just in this new spirit, method and vision that we see larger hope for the future.

The old theology was too dogmatic. She knew too much, especially outside her own realm, and knew it too certainly. She not only knew the year of creation, but the time of year, the day and the time of day. 'Her foible has been omniscience.' She seemed to feel that her own work was complete, and assumed to dictate the method and material for other sciences, or at least to sit in judgment on their findings. Boastful of possessing the truth once for all delivered to the saints, she was impatient with new facts, intolerant of new views, distrustful of new truth, suspicious of

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Edward Jefferson—"The New Age and Its Creed." p. 96.

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scholarship in other realms than her own. She would have been entirely content merely to have preserved inviolate the system of the fathers, rather than to have been put to the pains of making progress beyond that of the fathers.

But theology in these modern times has become less afraid of new facts, and more friendly to the scientific spirit. Theology is the science of religion. She has been regarded as the queen of sciences. Science necessarily changes with the progress of knowledge. There may, therefore, be a new theology without a new religion, and without breaking from the truth and reality found in the Bible. God, Christ, the nature of sin, the necessity of repentance, divine grace, the fact of regeneration, and the reality of God's love—all these stand from generation to generation. "There is as little danger of undermining religion by a new theology as there is of blotting out the stars by a new Astronomy."<sup>1</sup> If theology is in reality a science, she must be subject to change, she must become friendly to new facts and new truth.

We have come to see that religion as well as science needs something of the empirical spirit. It would be strange, indeed, if in every study but one, we are compelled to observe facts and follow the inductive method, but in the study of religion we should be content to listen only to the voice of the past, and to shut our eyes to new light. This method belongs distinctly to a past age. He who insists on following it "is a belated straggler, who in reality belongs to the

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<sup>1</sup> Lyman Abbot—"Theology of an Evolutionist." p. 3.

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twelfth century, but who in some mysterious way, has slipped into the company of modern thinkers, not understanding where he is."<sup>1</sup>

This unyielding, dogmatic temper of the older theology, relying chiefly on authority, came well nigh alienating the intellectual and educated classes from the church. Lovers of knowledge, the intellectually alert were not only eager, they were determined to know what was going on in the realm of scholarship. Many in the church on the other hand seemed to assume that ignorance of what was going on among scholars, among the thinkers of the world, was the only safe course for the church to follow. The old saying that 'ignorance is the mother of devotion' betrays this attitude of the past. Many well meaning ministers hesitated to discuss with the laity the findings of scholars in realms of religion. An over conservative theology heckled, found fault with many of the finest teachers in our colleges; and on the first sign of the appearance of these newer findings in popular religious literature, cried out against the writers as purveyors of heresy. High school and college students were given cause to feel that they were compelled to choose between the church with its old cautious attitude toward modern learning and with its medieval concepts of the universe, and the scientific interpretation of the world about us. Young people by the hundreds were giving up their Bibles and the church, not realizing that they could walk

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Edward Jefferson—"The New Age and Its Creed." p. 98.



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with both Christ and science. Well equipped and devoted ministers suspected of favoring a progressive theology were marked as dangerous, or condemned with faint praise and their influence damaged. This is not to say that there was no fault on the part of science or scientist, — there was; but we, here, are simply tracing a change of attitude in theology and the temper of the church.

It would be too much to affirm that all this is past, but the crisis is past. Theology has become more humble, more willing to heed the voice. "Except ye become as little children ye can not enter." The temper of the church has become more reasonable, more tolerant, less irritating. Progressives are in the ascendency. In all the recent church conventions whether in the home or foreign field, whether in the International Sunday School Convention or those of the Presbyterians or Baptist — undue controversy was easily silenced and reactionary forces were outvoted. The interests centered not about creed, but about religious activities and the great world tasks. Not radicals, but men with open minds and the forward look, devout men of progressive temperament of thought as well as of action held the reins of larger influence. There could not be real progress under reactionary leadership.

In the not distant past it was thought that this progressive attitude in theology was detrimental to spirituality, especially to evangelistic zeal and success. But that position can not now be successfully defended. Hundreds of men progressive in theology

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have manifested real passion in revival work and have enjoyed phenomenal success in 'soul winning.'

Hugh Price Hughes was progressive, but zealously evangelistic. It was said of him, "That he recalled our early fervor and enthusiasm for the souls of men and brought us in touch with contemporary life and the great movement of the time." Henry Drummond was progressive in Theology — a teacher of science and an earnest advocate and great expounder of the doctrine of evolution, but he possessed so great zeal for evangelistic work that he became a co-worker with Dwight L. Moody in his great revival campaigns. The late Bishop Bashford was one of the greatest missionary statesmen of the Methodist Church, an earnest advocate of the doctrine of sanctification, and passionately evangelistic. But he was progressive in theology. Indeed, as the newer theological spirit and method have found expression in the pulpit, the religious press, and Sunday School literature, somewhat in the same measure has the church made its greatest gains in membership, greatest increase in Sunday School interest and attendance, greatest advance on the foreign field, and has had the courage to formulate its greatest programs and launch its greatest campaigns for immediate future activities. It is, of course, too much to claim all this as a result of a new spirit and method in theology, but it is certainly quite within the bounds of truth to affirm that this progressive attitude has in no sense blocked the onward movements of Christianity, and that the fine achievements of the past two decades could not have

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been made with the dead hand of a non-progressive, dogmatic theology weighing heavily upon the Church. "A religion which is adapted to the requirements of modern life must first of all be adjusted to modern science. A religion which is not in harmony with modern science can not possibly remain the religion of the thinking class of the future."<sup>1</sup>

The newer theology, of course, gives far greater consideration to the social aspects of Christianity. It will build upon social science as well as upon the Bible. The older theology was so deeply interested in divinity that it came dangerously near overlooking humanity, especially humanity's social needs and relations. H. G. Wells is correct in saying "that by the fourth century we find all the Christian communities so agitated and exasperated by tortuous and elusive arguments about the nature of God as to be largely negligent of the simpler teachings of charity, service and brotherhood that Jesus inculcated." This peculiar emphasis upon creed and theology continued until late into the nineteenth century. Out of it we have inherited two hundred more or less Protestant sects and denominations. Not ceasing to stress the first great commandment, God and our love for Him, our newer theology gives greater emphasis to the second — our neighbor and our love for him. Not ceasing to concern itself about the Bible and the supernatural, it gathers also freely from psychology, anthropology, biology, comparative religion, sociology and history. The newer theology will make room for a spiritual

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<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Ellwood, *The Reconstruction of Religion*, p. 3.

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biology. It will become less coldly logical and metaphysical, less of Paul and more of Christ who declared "I am the way, the truth and the life," and am come "that ye might have life and might have it more abundantly."

We repeat, it is not so much in what modern theology has achieved toward completing a new system, but in her spirit, method and forward look there is hope for the future. We find ground for optimism in that the Church has the courage to change her opinions, is willing more largely to use the scientific method, in that without breaking from the truth as it is found in the scriptures she is more willing to recognize facts and reality wherever found, in that she has discovered that, in the last analysis, the highest loyalty to Christ is unflinching loyalty to the truth.

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"Today, we are in the midst of a religious revolution, which is going on so quietly that many do not notice it, although it is a greater and more fundamental revolution than any since the early years of the Christian era. We are witnessing great changes in the attitude of the churches on questions of faith and science. The spirit of science has entered into religion."

— *E. G. Conklin,*  
*"The Direction of Human Evolution."*

"We are the witnesses of the collapse of a finished epoch; the new generation is already at work, in many unrelated, apparently conflicting ways, at the building of another — even as we read, a new world is coming up in sombre dawn."

— *Fitch,*  
*"Can the Church Survive in the Changing Order?"*

## CHAPTER XVII

### OTHER TENDENCIES

**I**N THIS chapter, we desire in a loose-handed way to call attention to a number of tendencies, all of which we think are of a trend to inspire optimism.

Since theology is the science of religion, it may not be out of place to speak a word here in regard to the relation of theology and science in general. Ministers now in middle life have had an opportunity to witness three acts in a drama that might have resulted in real tragedy. As young men, we were reading about the warfare of science and theology. A little later we were reading books on the reconciliation of science and theology. We are now reading about the co-operation of science and theology. These changes are very significant. What tragedy would have resulted had this unnatural warfare of the past with all its bitterness continued, and there had resulted a constant conflict between the faith of the heart and the integrity of the head. Whatever conflict may have existed was simply between bad science on the one hand, and equally bad theology on the other. We have come to see that there can be no more real conflict between the final findings of science and theology than that truth can be in conflict with itself. The passing of this old warfare is a positive gain to the church, as it is also to science.

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Science has not hesitated to change. Abraham-like, it has not hesitated to sacrifice the "dearest children of its own thought." In this particular, at least, science has been more courageous than the older theology. The church has had its saints and martyrs — dauntless souls who have cheerfully died for their faith. "Our age has also its saints and martyrs — heroes who not only face death for their faith, but who can scrap their faith when facts have proved it wrong. This, indeed, is courage, and therein lies hope."<sup>1</sup> Science has spent little time in heresy hunting or in heresy trials. Theology in the past was wanting at this point. Her spirit of inquisition in the past does not make pleasant reading. Where we should expect tolerance she was intolerant. She was reluctant to drop worn-out and false views even after they were proved false. She was slow to drop the Ptolemaic for the Copernican theory of astronomy, slow to scrap Ussher's System of Chronology in the face of all the findings of Geology and Anthropology, slow to break from the guidance of the letter, to that of the spirit in Biblical interpretation. To be sure, the church is under no obligation to follow every beck and turn of "science-so-called," nor the latest wind that blows in modern thought. To run after every new doctrine because it is new, would be as fatal as to eschew the new, simply because it is new, and even more fatal than to cling to the old because it is old. But the church has finally learned that she, too, can change, and in many particulars is also learn-

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<sup>1</sup> Lothrop Stoddard—"The Revolts against Civilization"—p. 85.



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ing the wisdom of letting the "dead past bury its dead."

Furthermore, it was not long since that the church held a concept of faith that was largely incompatible with reason. We often speak of blind faith. Faith is not blind. Faith, at least in one of its important aspects, is simply reason consulting the experience of the past and all available knowledge and then launching into the unknown in the direction that present knowledge and past experience point. Reason falters, faith dares; reason keeps safely within the known, faith ventures and tries the unknown, but she ventures in the direction reason indicates. Faith is more than reason, but it is not unreasonable. In the past, the church has feared, and rightly too, a rationalism with faith and religion left out. The modern church has come to see that there is danger in a faith, a religion with reason left out. Reason as well as faith has its rights. The church has not lost faith. It is simply making greater use of reason and this is a step, we think, in the right direction. "The ages of irrational faith, we may hope, are past or passing; but the age of a rational and understanding faith is still ahead. We need the maximum of faith, not the minimum; but it must be a faith built upon facts."<sup>1</sup>

Many writers are insisting that the sanctions of the Christian religion are not as strong as in earlier days. "There was," says H. G. Wells, "a loss of faith after 1859. The true gold of religion was in

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<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Ellwood—"The Reconstruction of Religion"—p. 31.

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many cases thrown away with the worn-out purse that contained it and it was not recovered. . . . The seventeenth century kings, owners, rulers and leaders had had the idea at the back of their minds that they prevailed by the will of God; they really feared him, they got priests to put things right for them with him. When they were wicked, they tried not to think of him. But the old faith of kings, owners, and rulers of the opening twentieth century had faded under the actinic light of scientific criticisms."<sup>1</sup> Bertrand Russell thinks: "The influence of the Christian religion on daily life has decayed very rapidly throughout Europe the last hundred years;" and Professor Ellwood says: "Not only have religious beliefs and values changed but they have been immensely weakened." This is partially true, but it is not all loss. The old sanctions were largely those of fear and superstition. They were the sanctions of the policeman's club. What the Christian religion has lost in this direction it has gained and will continue to gain in wholesomeness. The Christian religion is more and more substituting the sanctions of science for superstition; of well tested truth for tradition; of reason, not for faith, but for irrational faith; of love for fear; of a desire to serve one's age for that of an individualistic salvation which often meant but little more than an escape from future punishment. The sanction, the incentive in religion today is largely that of a finer devotion to the

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<sup>1</sup> Outline of History—p. 957. The single volume.

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welfare of our fellowman growing out of a love of God as the common Father of us all.

Much of the common complaint to the effect that the Church has lost its old time power, has in mind the loss of the old time manifestations of emotion and ecstasy. The demand of this age, with the passion and hate that characterize certain classes, along with the wear and tear of our industrial life, is not for an emotional religion. Social conditions today demand a religion of the cool head as well as of the warm heart; a religion the fruits of which are gentleness, long-suffering, goodness, love, joy, peace, self-control; in short, of the tender sympathy and calm, unshakable repose of spirit that characterized Christ as he ministered midst the stress, passion and hate of his day. The absence of the old time emotionalism, however well it served its day, may be a mark of the wholesomeness of the religion that is striving to minister to our day. "Of emotional Christianity, the world has had enough, and has proved its utter inadequacy, except when it is accompanied by a thorough comprehension and radical acceptance of Christianity's Leader."<sup>1</sup>

The modern trend toward union among the churches is a hopeful sign. In the past, it looked as if Protestantism might deteriorate into a "mere huddle of sects, divided over lilliputian matters"—eighteen bodies of Methodists, eighteen of Baptists, sixteen of Mennonites, twelve of Presbyterians, some two hundred sects and denominations in all, spending

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<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Ellwood—"Reconstruction of Religion"—p. 152.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

their energies, in the not distant past, in sectarian bitterness and strife. Milton rightly characterized that condition as "the fantastic terrors of sects and schisms." We still have the divisions as an inheritance of the past, but the strife and bitterness is subsiding. The divisive spirit has largely past. The tide has turned. While certain denominations are exercised a bit over the fundamentalist movement, on the other hand, every week brings news of overtures of union. Instead of bitterness there has sprung up respect and good will. Instead of strife there is friendship. "Instead of the thorn there has come up the fir tree and instead of the briar has come up the myrtle tree." Mutual understanding has been reached in regard to work in the foreign field, and spheres of influence and activity have been agreed upon. Co-operative enterprises are undertaken in maintaining Christian colleges, and in the support of student pastors at State Universities. This is not to say there will be no divisions in the future. It is to say that the psychological attitude has been reversed. We are looking in the right direction. In a recent convention of the churches in China, the tendency was to ignore the things that divide Christianity of the Western world, and to unite in a Chinese Christian church.

Witness the Council of the federated Churches of Christ in America through which some thirty-five denominations and 100,000 ministers and 20,000,000 members all acknowledge the Deity and Lordship of Christ, and are working hand in hand for the redemp-

## OTHER TENDENCIES

tion of men. There has sprung up in these recent years a fine spirit of good will and co-operation among the different religious denominations.

It is generally recognized that we are passing through a transitional period that amounts virtually to a revolution — changes in industry, transportation, business, politics, government, science and philosophy. It would be strange indeed if there were not changes in the forms of religious thought, and in the programs for religious activity. The question is repeatedly asked, "Can the church survive this changing order; can she meet the tremendous demands of the age?" It should be remembered in a progressive civilization, every age involves a crisis, not only for the church but for all existing institutions. The demands upon Christianity in our present crisis are relatively no greater, the test relatively no severer than during the apostolic age, the age of Savonarola, of Luther, or of Wesley. Besides, periods of transition are fraught with opportunity as well as with danger. It is the breaking up period that brings the greater danger. We have fairly well survived that phase of the transition. "When human nature is most uncertain of itself, it is most easily influenced. Where conviction is wanting, persuasion has its opportunity. A restless age is a plastic age. The mood of our times has surrendered to neither good nor evil; it presents each with an opportunity for conquest. While it is yet pliable, neither the good nor the evil has the advantage over the other."<sup>1</sup> Our age is restless

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<sup>1</sup> John William Fraser—"The Untried Civilization,"—p. 56.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

and pliable. The opportunity for religious reconstruction is before the church. Professor Ellwood states the situation well in the following question and answer: "What is to be the end of the religious revolution? Is it to end in the negation of religion and, possibly, of idealistic morality?"

"Before any one draws such a pessimistic conclusion, it would be well to remember that while the dangers of serious reversion are great in any period of social transition, and revolution, yet they are not insurmountable, and if met by rational intelligence, they will probably be overcome and a higher stage of development ushered in. Human history indeed gives us every encouragement to believe that this will be the result in the present crisis."

## FACING FACTS

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again —  
The Eternal years of God are hers,  
But error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
And dies among his worshippers."

*Bryant.*

"Intelligent and brave men are not dismayed by danger. The good citizen sees in the perils that threaten society only occasions for more active effort, more earnest thought, and more unselfish devotion to duty."

*Giddings, — "Elements of Sociology."*

"The church universal with all its confusion is our inheritance, and its confusions are a part of our inheritance; and if instead of rejecting the church because of its confusions, we study these, we are likely to find certain aspects of order emerge; in the midst of disorder some things will stand out clearly. For instance, in every age and land, whatever its confusion, the great Christian Community has had the gift of producing a higher and greater type of character and such a type surely implies an unexpected unity."

— *F. R. Grover,*  
*The Nature and Purpose of Christian Society.*



## CHAPTER XVIII

### FACING FACTS

IT would be easy, ostrich-fashion, to bury our heads in the sands of the pleasant facts of our Christian civilization only, and refuse to recognize certain very distressing phases of our modern life. Divorces, juvenile delinquency and crime in general are, no doubt, on the increase. Raymond B. Fosdick, in his *American Police System* gives ample facts concerning the amount of crime in this country compared with that in European countries, and the comparison is by no means flattering to America. He places much of the blame on our police system. To be sure, since the war, crime has been so featured by our newspapers as to leave a distorted view of real conditions. Crime has been represented as a wave, and as if we are on the crest of that wave. But these outbreaks of social disorder perhaps represent not so much a wave, as they do a rather constant current that flows down through our American life. It must be admitted that it is a rather wide and deep current.

Before the World War was thought of, the Literary Digest, under the caption, "The Helpless Police," gave some rather startling facts in regard to the prevalence and cost of crime. The figures are given for 1908, and by a conspicuous diagram, point out for that year:

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Value of wool .....	\$298,000,000
Value of coal .....	350,000,000
Value of wheat .....	735,000,000
National Debt .....	964,000,000
Annual cost of crime .....	1,373,000,000

and then, somewhat in keeping with Mr. Fosdick's complaint, asks: "Do these facts,—when offset against our two convictions in every one hundred murders—explain why our lawlessness is increasing, why we have more homicides every year than Italy, Austria, France, Belgium, England, Ireland, Scotland, Spain, Hungary, Holland and Germany combined?" Much of our after-war lawlessness is freely conceded to be due to the lapse in morals, that, as shown by history, is a regular consequence of war. May not some of this lawlessness be due to a deeper cause? New forces, though in the end beneficial, often are the cause of real disturbances.

The approach of spring, by the breaking up of ice, and freshets from melting snow often cause inconvenience and real damage. The growing sense of democracy is susceptible to certain abuses. Liberty, to many, means license. Lawlessness at times is but a surface indication, lamentable to be sure, of the working of a principle that in itself is good. It is a paradox we know, but in this sense, increased crime may be a sign of increasing good.

When a student in college, I had a very fine instructor who later became the sainted Bishop Bashford. It was during that period when, in religious circles, there was considerable concern over the

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theory of evolution lest it should endanger or overthrow our old faith. Dr. Bashford was an "evolutionist" and wisely tried to guide his students from the old theory to the new without a complete break in their Christian moorings. He used to impress upon us that in the evolution of the Christian Kingdom, while the Kingdom of Christ may be growing better and larger, the Kingdom of darkness might grow the more intensely wicked, until in time a gulf between the two kingdoms might become fixed. Can it be that this, in a measure, is what we are now witnessing?

There is a significant passage also in the teachings of Christ: "Think not that I come to send peace on the earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword, for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." This clearly sets forth the disturbing nature of even a benevolent principle—the confusion that accompanies a transition—that may precede a larger and better epoch. Apply this to the increase of juvenile crime and divorce. In a measure, at least, these growing irregularities may be the surface indication that the Kingdom of Christ is advancing.

The gradual emancipation and crowning of the child under the influence of Christianity, is a long and interesting story—far too long to narrate here in anything like detail. The power of life and death of the father over the son in Roman civilization was by no means a mere legal fiction. Three different

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

Romans of position — Cassius, Scarus, and Fulvius — are mentioned by Valerius Maximus as having been executed by their fathers and another son was banished by his father. <sup>1</sup> The right of a father to sell his son in case of great need and poverty was fully recognized. The revolting and inhuman practice of exposure or abandonment of children of the poor, and of female and defective children of the rich, was common. Many of course perished from exposure, or were torn to pieces by wild beasts, but the girls were often picked up to be reared for immoral purposes and the defectives to be exhibited for gain. Parental tyranny even in the most private matters of the family persisted well into the Christian era.

In early American life we had the patriarchal family. The old Puritan tradition of work also sanctioned child labor, and even leading statesmen looked upon the coming of "the Mill" as a blessing to furnish employment to the idle youth. Family traditions and ideals in favor of child labor, as well as the greed on the part of manufacturers, made it easy to put both women and children in our mills. As a natural outgrowth, the American factories were manned for a time almost entirely by women and children. Certain European immigrants particularly laid the emphasis on family labor and thrift. Parents were interested in children for their economic value. "On the birth of a son, they exulted in the gift of a plough-man or waggoner; and on the birth of a daughter they rejoiced in the addition of another

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<sup>1</sup> *Gesta Christi*, C. L. Brace, p. 10.

## FACING FACTS

spinster or milkmaid to the family.'"<sup>1</sup> This family system of labor, and the view that children might be an advantage for industry and gain, still persists in the cotton mills of the south, and recent decisions of the Supreme Court would seem to render us helpless to remedy the situation by federal law. In the very recent past, therefore children were found in the shops. This age has put the child in the school. Tomorrow, with our perfected Sunday School, we shall put the child not in the shop, — there untimely to waste its energies of body and mind, — but in both the school and the Church where, in keeping with divine economy, it belongs; and this promises to correct much of our juvenile irregularity. It is significant that even now the Sunday School enrollment of our country surpasses that of our public school enrollment. But the improved Sunday School of the future must do better work in building character. What other age found its children in both the school and church?

There is little any longer in common between the home of modern life and that of colonial times. This transition was gradually going on during the early period of our national history. Since the Civil War, the change has been made complete. This new spirit of tolerance and freedom which now prevails in the home, has had its bad as well as its good effect. While we can now boast of the bright, free children that grace our American life, this freedom on the other hand easily gave rise to youthful precocity, dis-

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<sup>1</sup> See "Introduction to Social Ethics"—by Mecklin, p. 229.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

obedience and juvenile delinquency.<sup>1</sup> The past crowned the supposedly great and mighty. This age is fast dispensing with such crowned dignitaries. With greater wisdom and in keeping with the Christ example, we crown the child. Such a revolution, of course, could not be effected without certain regrettable disorders. While these transitions cost, they are worth while. "The greater the rate of progress the heavier does the cost become; the faster the march, the larger is the number of the exhausted who fall by the way. Progress like any other form of motion in the Universe, starts reactions against itself."<sup>1</sup> To a certain extent, juvenile delinquencies, therefore, may indicate progress.

Equally interesting is the gradual evolution of the modern woman under the elevating influence of Christianity. This story also is too long to narrate in these pages. Women today have been granted suffrage in something like twenty-five different countries and provinces. They have finally come to their own industrially, socially, politically. But with this new freedom, and no doubt, partly because of it, divorces are on the increase.

Few things are more alarming in our modern civilization than this growing menace to the integrity of family life. Statistics indicate that "in 1885 the United States had 23,472 divorces, while all other Christian countries had 20,131. In 1905, the figures were 68,000 to 40,000, the United States leading the

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<sup>1</sup> See Mecklin. Introduction to Social Ethics. p. 236.

<sup>1</sup> Giddings, Elements of Sociology, p. 318.

## FACING FACTS

rest of Christendom by 28,000 divorces. During the decade from 1890 to 1900, divorces increased in this country sixty-six and six-tenths per cent, or more than three times the increase in population. By 1906 the proportion of divorces to marriages was approximately one to thirteen and nine tenths. If the present rate of increase of divorces continues, it has been estimated that by the end of the century, more than half of all marriages will end in divorce."<sup>1</sup> Since 1916 the divorce rate in the United States exceeds that of Japan, which had previously had the highest rate of any great civilized nation. A glance at the following table will indicate the growth of this evil:

### *Divorces by Years*

1901....61,698	1911.... 94,622
1902....62,108	1912....100,927
1903....65,263	1913....106,053
1904....67,086	1914....110,759
1905....68,901	1915....115,879
1906....72,786	1916....114,036
1907....77,636	1917....120,243
1908....81,579	1918....124,928
1909....85,199	1919....129,496
1910....91,638	1920....132,753
The decade, 1900-1910, 733,894	
The decade, 1911-1920, 1,149,696	
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Total in 20 years	1,883,590 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mecklin—Introduction to Social Ethics.

<sup>2</sup> Six counties have had more divorces than marriages: Pawnee, Okla.; Washoe, Nev.; Trinity, Calif.; Ruthford, Tenn.; Union, Oregon; Clackamas, Oregon.

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Divorced persons	3,767,182
Minor children named in divorce decrees	1,318,696
Adult children affected	500,000

The worst offenders are Montana, Oklahoma, Indiana, Arizona, California, Wyoming, with one divorce in six marriages; Idaho, and Washington with one in five; Oregon with one in two and five-tenths; Nevada "reaching the apex of national infamy" with a ratio of one divorce to one and five tenths marriages.<sup>1</sup>

There are, no doubt, many factors that enter this problem. Perhaps the two largest are the economic and the moral. The economic includes unemployment, low wages, a feeling of inability to support a family. The moral includes desertion, cruelty, adultery, and drunkenness. It is held that these moral causes constitute ninety-seven per cent of divorces. The prohibition law is rapidly correcting drunkenness and is already having a favorable effect in improving family relations. But it is not easy to separate moral and economic causes. They are inter-active — the one provoking the other.

While much and very much may be said about the virtues of the American home, the home of a generation ago had, along with all that might be said in its favor, some serious limitations. Its virtues flourished in what has been called "a closed circle." These virtues were not carried over into the larger social and

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<sup>1</sup> According to lately reported statistics, San Francisco has half as many divorces as marriages, and Portland has one divorce for every two and a quarter marriages.



## FACING FACTS

civic life. If not selfish, it was at least self-centered. Our free, progressive democracy has broken down some of the older artificial and external supports, and is building a new foundation upon free, loyal intellectual and living comradeship.

Divorce, therefore, in America may be partly incidental to a moral transformation. Professor Howard makes the following observation: "Of a truth to the serious student of social evolution, the accelerated divorce movement appears clearly as an incident in the mighty process of spiritual liberation which is radically changing the relative positions of men and women in society. . . . The corporate unity of the patriarchal family has been broken up and even completely destroyed. More and more, wife and child have been released from the sway of the home-father, and placed directly under the larger social control . . . The family bond is no longer coercion, but persuasion. The tie which holds the members of the family together is ceasing to be judicial and becoming spiritual."<sup>1</sup> Professor Hudson, also, after a careful discussion of the present tendencies and symptoms of the age reaches the conclusion: "That the contradictions of our own day may mean the advancement toward a new moral order."<sup>2</sup>

How far the above discussion explains the ugly facts of the prevalence of crime and social evils, we shall not try definitely to estimate. As the situation now stands, even the fervent optimist is compelled to admit

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<sup>1</sup> See "Introduction to Social Ethics"—Mecklin—p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> See Charles A. Ellwood—"The Reconstruction of Religion."  
—p. 14.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

that it is nothing short of a national scandal and menace which law as well as persuasion and the best ethical teaching should hasten to correct.

It is difficult, however, for an optimist, especially for one who even in a slight way has come in touch with European life to believe that American life, and American individual character is as much more corrupt than European life as comparative tables of crime and divorce would seem to indicate. There must be a different and more favorable explanation. There are those who maintain that European family life is not as wholesome as in America. That certain irregularities there, on the part of the husband in particular, are regarded as a matter of course and cause little disturbance in family relations. The same laxity in America would strain family relations, and lead to divorce. So far as this is true, American domestic life is the more wholesome, even though there are more divorces.

There are reasons to believe that when all the forces are properly studied that cause this lamentable condition in America it will yet be seen that our family life is essentially sound, and that there never was a time when America could boast of so many happy homes, and so much wholesome home life as at the present time. We freely admit that there is cause for anxiety, and need for an awakening from our indifference in regard to this subject, but we do not believe that the situation need produce despair nor pessimism.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

“The Kingdom is coming, not come; the Church is making, not made. Christendom is in a sense a word of the past; its history may be traced out and written down. In a sense it is a word of the present, representing a mighty living force today. Still more is it a word of the future, for as yet we have not been able to see what Christianity fully means. He was right, who in answer to the question, ‘Is the Christian religion played out?’ replied, ‘It has not yet been tried’.”

— *W. T. Davison.*

## CHAPTER XIX

### WHAT OF THE FUTURE

IT IS quite easy to prophesy, particularly if one prophesies concerning events to be fulfilled far enough in the future. If the prophecy is not fulfilled, one can conveniently forget the whole matter. If, perchance, it should prove true, one can claim credit for great foresight.

The following prophecy is attributed to Sir Isaac Newton: "I believe, from the study of God's word, that in the future He will greatly accelerate the movement of converting the world and accomplish the work suddenly. But I am convinced, also, from the study of the Word, that before that comes to pass, there will be a marvelous increase in the speed of transportation on the earth. I believe that in the Providence of God, though the method now be entirely hidden, men will yet travel on the earth at the rate of fifty miles an hour."<sup>1</sup> The world laughed at him; an increase of speed from eight to fifty miles an hour was utterly beyond the frontier of its thought. The keen and caustic Voltaire said in bitter scorn: "One can see how stupid the old Bible is, in that it has addled the intellect of Sir Isaac Newton, the most acute on the earth, until he talks like a fool. He says the time

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<sup>1</sup> H. G. Wells in "Short History of the World" soon to be published will predict that we are in but the dawn of human greatness, that we will go on in ever-widening circles of adventure and achievement—See *Colliers*, November 11, 1922.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

will come when a man will be at one point on the earth's surface at the beginning of an hour and fifty miles away at the end of it. Absurd! Unthinkable!"

The pessimist was wrong again, as this prediction of the optimist has been more than fulfilled. Two generations ago the lumbering old stage coach, making about eight miles an hour, was quite generally in use. Our fastest trains now run on a sixty mile per hour schedule, and have reached a speed of 112 miles an hour, thus not only fulfilling but surpassing Sir Isaac's prediction and even doubling it.

Should we go back a hundred years, before trains were in use, and compare the rate of travel of that day with modern air service, we secure a most striking contrast. The modern flying machine can make, if necessary, a schedule of one hundred thirty to one hundred fifty miles an hour — an increase in the rate of travel of over one thousand per cent in a hundred years. The new French hospital airship is constructed to make a speed of one hundred thirty miles per hour. On April 6, 1922, at Daytona Beach, Florida, Sir Haugdahl drove his specially constructed motor car at the rate of 180.27 miles per hour, covering a mile in 19.97 seconds, thus making a new world record. In the aerial races, Oct. 14, 1922, a distance of 1600 miles was traveled at an average speed of 206 miles an hour, and a rate of 248.5 per mile was reached, covering one kilometer.

So far as the United States is concerned, the accumulation of wealth also is phenomenal. The National wealth of the United States was:

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1850 .....	\$7,135,780,000
1860 .....	16,159,616,000
1870 .....	30,068,518,000
1880 .....	43,642,000,000
1890 .....	65,037,091,000
1900 .....	88,517,306,000
1910 .....	140,000,000,000
1920 .....	300,000,000,000

Edgar Crammond, in a paper read before the Bankers' Institute, London, England, June 1920, estimated the national wealth of the United States at \$350,000,000,000 to \$400,000,000,000, and that of other great countries as follows:<sup>1</sup>

The United Kingdom .....	\$120,000,000,000
France .....	92,500,000,000
Germany .....	83,000,000,000
Italy ....—.....	35,500,000,000
Japan .....	23,500,000,000
Belgium .....	12,000,000,000

The sense of Christian stewardship, as pointed out in a foregoing chapter, is gaining more rapidly than wealth in general. There is a basis for the growing expectancy through the new emphasis that all churches are placing on the obligation of stewardship, and the great joy and satisfaction people are discovering in the better use of accumulated wealth, that suddenly the Christian nations, in keeping with the ideals of New Testament standards, may consecrate all their wealth to the service and highest welfare of humanity.

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<sup>1</sup> See The World Almanac.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

Moreover, business men are beginning to recognize the economic value of foreign missions and are interesting themselves in the extension of Christianity. Not long since the Lieutenant Governor of New Guinea said every penny spent by missionaries saves pounds to the administration, for the missions bring peace, law and order. Even in our own country, the Digger Indian got his breakfast out of an ant hill with a stick, and was so nearly devoid of all garments that you could have clothed him for a year on twenty-five cents worth of cotton. He is but a type of many thousands in the heathen world. The business world is recognizing that you can not carry on commerce with such peoples. Christianize, civilize these people and they will need shoes, hats, clothing, furniture, houses, tools, machinery, books, papers, a thousand and one things that make them valuable as traders. Our average business with England is about one hundred fifty dollars per individual; with China about eight dollars; with Africa about three dollars. This difference of trade simply indicates the difference in progress of civilization, or shall we say the progress of Christianity in these countries? Recently a leading journal gave an account of a meeting of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce which a few years ago selected twenty-five business men from six of the coast cities and sent them to China to study trade conditions. On their return they voted unanimously that relations between missions and trade were very close. They declared that if it had not been for the missionaries there would be little or no trade with the interior



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of China. A British statesman recently declared that a missionary twenty-five years on the field, is worth \$50,000 a year to the commerce of Great Britain. It is freely asserted that China is now under a republican form of government because of the influence of Christian missions. It would seem that many conditions are converging toward the fulfillment of Newton's prophecy.

Newton was correct also in recognizing that certain changes and new conditions were necessary before a rapid and sudden movement toward the Christianization of the world could take place. For want of those conditions, Greece failed to extend her democracy beyond a city state. Rome found it difficult to hold together the widely scattered provinces conquered by her "far flung battle lines." The present British Empire, including one fifth of the land area of the earth and distributed over the entire globe; and our own Republic, extending from sea to sea and including many distant islands of the Pacific, would have been well nigh impossible before the coming of the printing press, the fast going steamship, the railway, the telephone and ocean cable.

It is not only that we have learned to travel at the rate of fifty to one hundred miles an hour, but we are in possession of many other means that may become agencies in accelerating the coming of the Kingdom. The rapid growth of the English language, promising soon to be understood the world around; our improved methods of sowing, reaping and milling, making it possible to wipe out famine and adequately to feed the world; the wonderful advance in medical

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science, assuring a lengthened and more wholesome and efficient physical life; the advanced means of communication and transportation — the telephone, the wireless, the aeroplane. Nations are now in touch through the air as well as by land and water. They can literally catch each other's speech out of the atmosphere.

A new interest in foreign peoples is everywhere manifest. Foreign news has captured the front page of the daily papers of all the leading nations. The attainment of a warless world has become a ruling passion and is advocated by pen and persuasion, in schools and colleges and books, and in the highways and byways of public life. It is no longer confined to the efforts of a few idealists.

There are also indications that education and religion may become more closely united. Education promises again "to become in intention and spirit religious, and that the impulse to devotion, to universal service and to complete escape from self, may reappear again, stripped and plain, as the recognized fundamental structural impulse of human society."<sup>1</sup> Education may become the preparation of the individual for the community, for international sympathy and good-will, for the world view, for the feeling of common brotherhood toward all peoples of earth; and religious training emphasizing the cardinal principle of the Universal Fatherhood of God may soon be recognized as the heart of that preparation, creating a new spirit, a new enthusiasm, a new passion and

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<sup>1</sup> H. G. Wells—The Outline of History, p. 1089, single volume.

## WHAT OF THE FUTURE

dynamic for world conquest in the name of the World's Redeemer — Jesus Christ.

Along with the teaching of the Bible and the preaching of the church, science, commerce, the press, and statesmen are proclaiming the unity of the race and are meeting in international conference and planning for the welfare of mankind. A new international mindedness has sprung up and with it a new international consciousness. It is a hopeful sign that our leaders in public life are, in greater numbers than ever before, pronounced in their allegiance to the principles of the Christian faith — Lloyd George, Generals Foch and Pershing, Harding, Hughes, Bryan, Wilson, Daniels and literally scores of others. Many of the Oriental representatives to the Washington Conference are of confessed Christian affiliation. No less than eighty of the Chinese delegation are related to churches or to the Young Men's Christian Association. In the Japanese group there are twenty men who have served on local or national Young Men's Christian Association committees. The delegate from India, Mr. Sastri, was welcomed in New York upon his arrival by the International committee of the Young Men's Christian Association.

The hope of the future now seems to depend on four great agencies — science, democracy, education and religion. The present progress and outlook in all four are of a character to inspire optimism.

This is rightly called the scientific age. In no phase of our modern life has progress been so marked

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as in the field of science. Its victories read like a fairy tale, and one is compelled to draw on the imagination to grasp, in any measure, its marvelous conquests, and it would seem that we are at present merely at the threshold of the most amazing revelations. Science has become far too resourceful and powerful to be permitted longer to devote its energies to destructive weapons in the interests of warfare. In the future it must be wholly consecrated to constructive work in the interests of peace and progress. Science has had its faults as has every other agency that has wrought in the interest of mankind. It has been far too fragmentary. Scientists working in their own little department have failed to recognize the relation of their fields to the whole. It also has been too exclusively engaged with the physical. It is only recently that it has seriously undertaken to deal with our social and religious welfare. There is need for greater synthetic work among scientists. They draw conclusions from too small a number of experiments or at least from too small a range of observation. Science, however, is determined to know the truth, and more and more it is revealing new truth and liberating old truth from its mixture of error. One hope of the future lies in this ever enlarging truth. For if the truth shall make us free, we shall be free indeed.

Democracy, at least so far as its extensive phase is concerned, is triumphant. Indeed, its spread during the past decade has been so phenomenal that its very growth threatens to become its embarrassment. But

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the entire concept of democracy is now undergoing careful review and critical analysis. We have already come to realize we must have more than political democracy, more than universal suffrage, more than equal rights and opportunities, more than the voice and counsel of the common man. Democracy must emphasize duties and obligations as well as personal rights. It must beget "the larger heart and the kindlier hand." "Modern democracy is becoming less a matter of personal rights, less a matter of party programs, less a matter of legal traditions and more a state of mind, a feeling of community interests based upon common ideals."<sup>1</sup> Democracy must become more a matter of the spirit, more a sympathetic cooperation with our fellow men in an attempt to work out humanity's highest destiny. It must partake more largely of the Christian ideal of brotherhood, acknowledging a common Father, hence, a common family of which each and all are members. It must build on education and religion, for democracy was never intended for illiterate and irreligious peoples. This age is working out a new democracy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mecklin—Introduction to Social Ethics, p. 436.

<sup>2</sup> "The Church and Industrial Reconstruction," p. 16, states this larger meaning of Democracy as follows: "In this insistence upon the value of the individual personality and the underlying faith in the potential capacity of the least of men to fulfill some worthy function in society, Christianity finds its point of contact with modern democracy. Democracy is the attempt to realize this fundamental right of every personality to self expression through cooperation with others in a common task. In the political sphere it has already found large recognition. But we are discovering that there are other spheres of human interest to which it equally applies. In fact, if we begin by accepting the Christian estimate of man we shall find it difficult to set any limits to democracy. It applies, or should apply, in the sphere of organized religion, which is the Church. It applies in the sphere of industry, etc." See also Conklin "The Direction of Human Evolution" p. 100 and Giddings, "Elements of Sociology" p. 315.

## RELIGIOUS OPTIMISM

The trend in education despite certain modern criticisms is wholesome. The flocking of youth to our high schools and colleges, the passion of the American people for education, point in the right direction. While most of our educational work is well done, in view of the needs of this age, and the rapid spread of democracy, our educational system also is being subjected to a searching criticism, which in the end is bound to prove beneficial. Education must be less subject to the immediate demands of the age. It must assume initiative and leadership and in a larger way help to direct and mold modern life. We must not only educate for efficiency but for leisure as well, in order to save men and women from becoming mere machines under the influence of modern industrial life. Education must be fraught with a larger social, ethical and religious content. It must break from the mass-curriculum and more fully adapt itself to individual capacities. It must include at least four leading objectives: (1) The intellectual, covering all that modern knowledge and experience have to furnish in general enlightenment and in disciplining the mind, enabling the individual to grapple with the real problems of modern, practical life. (2) The cultivation of a disposition which inclines one to the good, pure, true and beautiful. (3) Strength of will, sufficient to lead one to assume his full share of the world's work and to hold one steadfast in the path of rectitude. (4) An international consciousness. Many of our great problems now arise out of international relations and this will be more largely

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true in the future. Education must do more to impart the world-view and to give an understanding and appreciation of foreign peoples. It must do, only it must do it better, what the Church is trying to do through its missionary instruction and it must do it without minimizing or merging our finest spirit of nationalism. "Patriotism of humanity" must be taught along with national patriotism.

It has been the effort of this volume to prove that the church is alert, active and progressive in a measure never before known, that its sanctions are more wholesome than ever before.

We do not agree with those who maintain that the church has carried the extensive phase of its work too far, that her activities are too many and too widely spread. She must still dare farther in these directions. The entire world is her legitimate field, and she must aim to sanctify not a part of life but the whole of life — individual, social, national and international. But there is much justice in the criticism that the Church of God needs to enrich and deepen her own life. In proportion as we lengthen our cords, we must strengthen our stakes. In the proportion we scatter our activities, we must enrich our spirit. There is urgent need, therefore, for renewed faith, devotion, prayer, and consecration. The progress in all these great agencies for human betterment reveals little ground for pessimism and none for despair, but it is of a character, on the contrary, to inspire hope, courage and well-grounded optimism. As religious workers, we need to lose that caution that leads us



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to think over much about our own denominational interests and safety and assume the divine recklessness of the Master who was willing to risk his life in order to save the world. Many sects and denominations must assume the attitude of John the Baptist, — a willingness to decrease that Christ may increase.

In sculpture, the Laocoön Group, which represents Laocoön and his two sons struggling with the serpents that came up out of the Aegean Sea to punish the priests for warning Troy of the dangers of admitting the wooden horse, is generally regarded as one of the world's greatest masterpieces. The figures are portrayed in that awful moment when they come to realize their fate and are gradually relaxing their efforts against the twin monsters of the sea. Critics and pessimists would have us believe that that fatal moment has come upon the Church. But a modern artist has given a new and far better interpretation to this ancient theme of humanity's struggle with evil. Mr. Edstrom, in his "Man Triumphant," has caught the spirit and trend of the church of this age. His theme is the same as that of the Greek masterpiece; but the issue is victory, not defeat. On the sides of the pedestal, as this modern masterpiece is described, are four figures representing humanity's achievements through physical power, through education, through cultivation of the emotional nature and through religion. We should care to change this but slightly and permit the four figures to stand for science, education, democracy, and the Christian religion — Man triumphant through these forces is the



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optimistic answer to the despair of the world, represented by the Greek artist about the time when Christianity entered, and to the gloom and forebodings of modern pessimism in regard to the Church and our modern civilization.

"God grant us wisdom in these coming days,  
And eyes unsealed, that we clear visions see  
Of that new world that He would have us build  
To Life's ennoblement and His high ministry!

God give us sense — God-sense — of Life's new needs,  
And souls aflame with new-born chivalries —  
To cope with those black growths that foul the ways—  
To cleanse our poisoned founts with God-born energies!

To pledge our souls to nobler, loftier life,  
To win the world to His fair sanctities,  
To bind the nations in a pact of peace,  
And free the soul of Life for finer loyalties!

Not since Christ died upon His lonely cross  
Has Time such prospect held of Life's new birth,  
Not since the world of chaos first was born  
Has man so clearly visaged hope of a new earth!

Not of our own might can we hope to rise  
Above the ruts and soilures of the past,  
But with His help who did the first earth build,  
With hearts courageous we may fairer build this last!"<sup>1</sup>

*FINIS*

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<sup>1</sup> From the Brooklyn Eagle in a Sermon by Dr. Hillis.

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BR      Smith, Robert Philip, b.1863.  
121      Religious optimism. Boston, Stratfo  
S65      [c1922]  
         189p. 20cm.

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